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Picquetts Pond Bottom, Bridgetown, Barbadoes.

FIVE YEARS' RESIDENCE

IN

THE WEST INDIES.

BY CHARLES WILLIAM DAY, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF "HINTS ON ETIQUETTE."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

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P R E F A C E.

I SHOULD have dedicated this work to one of the kindest men and best Governors that the West Indies ever had—as noble in mind as in name, but that his Excellency was afraid of my truthful revelations. He had seen, and heard read, parts of my MS., and had observed, “I am sorry to say that what you have written is but too true; yet at home they are not aware of it, though it deserves to be made known to all England; but, there, it will not be believed.” Why not believed?—because Policy, not Truth, governs the world; and the West Indies in particular; so we have all but given up these magnificent islands to the barbarian, to lapse once more into a mere lair for the negro—not to the aboriginal inhabitant, but to a savage ten times worse, brought four thousand miles to repress the civilization which otherwise might, by a possibility, have flourished there. “The Ethiop cannot change his skin, nor the white man amalgamate with the black.” Nature has forbidden

it, unless to the utterly depraved. All that is here written is the result of unbiassed observation, as the author is of no party ; though rejecting the Utopian absurdities of Exeter Hall. No one can judge of negroes but those who have lived among them. The isolated specimens seen in England afford no more idea of the race, than an American at Almack's reveals of Jonathan on his own pinnacle at Marble Head, whilst five years is time enough in all conscience for any person of common intelligence to see the truth. Most writers have given their opinions after a cursory examination of a few weeks—nay !—many of them, after a sojourn of only a few days in each of the islands. The author never wrote many pages consecutively, without submitting them to some person in a position to judge of their truth, and quite unconnected with plantership or trade ; some member, in fact, of the Law, the Church, or the State ; so that if any serious error had crept into his remarks, it might at once be pointed out and rectified. The truths which the author tells, may be unpalatable to West Indians, but they cannot be impugned, simply because they are truths, and nothing else.

LONDON, APRIL, 1852.

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FIVE YEARS' RESIDENCE

IN THE

WEST INDIES.

CHAPTER I.


SET OUT FOR BARBADOES—THE DOLPHIN—CATCHING A SHARK—
ACCOUNT OF AN EARTHQUAKE—FLYING FISHES—DEAD RECKON-
ING—ARRIVAL AT THE ISLAND.

AFTER a three years' residence in the United States, I got tired of their disagreeable inhabitants, and an opportunity occurring for visiting the West Indies, I embarked at Baltimore, in October, 1846, on board a British colonial brig, the 'B——,' of one hundred and thirty-four tons, for Barbadoes, paying thirty dollars, or six guineas, for my voyage of one thousand nine hundred miles. I do not intend to inflict upon my readers a detailed account of rather a long voyage, as we had merely the usual complement of gales, squalls, calms and currents; but I may mention one or two matters, about which "doctors differ," greatly assisted

as I was by my capacity to draw, thereby noticing many things that might escape the uninitiated in that art.

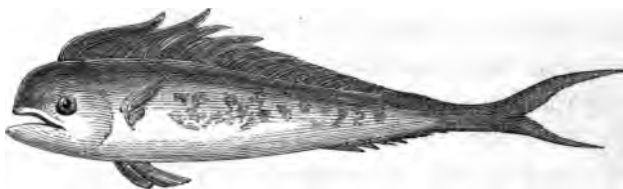
After we had been several weeks at sea, we caught a magnificent "bull" dolphin, three feet long. It was horribly "under-hung" in the jowl; the belly was of a dirty orange, or tawny colour, having on it sundry blue spots; the back, a bright green, changing to a deep blue. This bull had a fine mane (dorsal fin), extending the whole length of his back, and which erected itself like the bristles of a wild boar. I made a drawing of our prize, as he floundered about, seemingly not at all satisfied with his introduction to the upper world. When I had finished with him, Jack—our second mate—took him in hand, and I quietly waited the result. He certainly *did* change colour a little, as he gasped and suffocated in the new—and to him—fatal element. When Jack thrust his sailor's knife into his gills, the change was magical. In a moment he turned from his livery of deep orange and blue to a pale, silvery salmon-white; it was like the ghastliness of a man who has received a fatal stab—a death shudder. By degrees, some of the original colour returned, but as life ebbed, it subsided into a dull dark grey. Therefore, under certain circumstances, the hues of the dying dolphin are *not* poetical fictions.

Of course we had the dolphin for dinner, both plain boiled, and bedevilled with onions; and considered as a change at sea, it was by no means bad. When cold, the next morning, however, it tasted oily and strong.



Inside the dolphin we found four odd fish, an inch and a half long. They were, I believe, the *Monacelli*, or "little monks," of the Mediterranean, and I was informed that they turn black when cooked.

I may here mention that of all the fishes depicted in works on natural history, the dolphin and shark are the least like nature. This probably arises from the cause, that of those likely to see the dolphin *in situ*, few can draw correctly enough to give a proper idea of it, and artists lack the opportunity of seeing these marine monsters anywhere out of a museum. But whatever the cause, the fact is undeniable, and I therefore took particular care to be as correct in my sketch as possible.



Much has been written (by Captain Basil Hall, I think,) about the long-snouted, porpoise-looking Delphini, being the dolphin of the ancients; but I cannot agree in this opinion, as from antique seals and frescoes, nay, even under the barbarous guise of heraldry, the assimilation, even to colour, with the modern dolphin of sailors, is evident at a glance. Besides, the snouted dolphins (of which I saw a boat-load at Port of Spain) are of one uniform brown colour, like the back of a sole. In the Mediterranean,

the *Delphini* of the Levantine crew were simply porpoises, as I saw hundreds of them, and heard them so called on my voyage from Egypt.

A few days previous to this we had taken a small shark. This sea-lawyer was but two feet and a half long, yet, when bouncing about the deck, there was a good deal of scrambling to get out of the way of his jaws. However, a few thrusts with Jack's knife, a chop or two across the tail, and his head cut off (all done leisurely, with infinite *gusto*, as if it were a real pleasure), almost neutralised the danger. When, however, we clapped a stout mopstick in the mouth of the dissevered head, the teeth instantly closed on it, and that so tightly as to leave some deeply-indented marks. The teeth are sheathed, like the claws of a cat, but they come out in a formidable row, like a miniature man-trap; and as we excited the mouth, they kept in action for fully half an hour. When *very dead*, I stuck the head up, and made two accurate drawings of it.

The eyes were of a greenish hue, like Miss Sheridan's "old cat," and were placed close down by the mouth, giving it a horribly ferocious look. The colour of the back was that of the back of a sole—a brownish-grey; the belly, and the head below the nostrils, were white.

This shark was cooked for dinner, and had he been but decently dressed, would probably have been palatable, but sailors only relish strong messes. The shark, therefore, was fried with onions, with pepper and salt, and cook's slush — *ad nauseum* — slush being grease, of the colour of virgin honey, and pecu-

liar to ship-board. The flesh of this dainty was very white indeed.

Our "caw-pen"—a low tyrant from Dumfriesshire, but very civil to me—had had, when mate, the calf of his leg torn away, literally bitten off by a shark. It appeared that the monster had just been caught, and was floundering about on the quarter-deck, when the mate, in attempting to pass him, felt a slight tug at his trowsers (as he thought), and a by-stander noticed blood trickling down his leg. On examination, the flesh was found to be bitten completely out, and the man fainted.

The same authority communicated to me some particulars of the earthquake which occurred at St. John's, Antigua, on the 8th of February, 1843, he at the time being mate on board a brig lying in the inner roads, close to the town. He was sitting in the cabin, writing, and his first impression was that the chain-cable was running out of the hawser-hole, and that the ship was dragging her anchor, so strangely did it rattle. He rushed on deck, and ordered more cable to be paid out, but found the sea quite calm, and the buoy perfectly still. Instantly afterwards, however, there was a loud explosion close under the bows, followed by a volume of smoke as broad as the companion (the opening leading down to the cabin), and which smoke rose in the air as high as the ship's tops. He saw the same phenomenon all around him, whilst on looking towards the shore, he observed all the windmills (of which there are many in Antigua) sink on their sides, and the gar-

rison levelled, which he immediately concluded to be the effect of an earthquake.

This seems to confirm one of the theories of the *cause* of earthquakes; the earth being cavernous, vast fissures, leading from the grand central mass of incandescent matter, and probably extending in various directions through the still refrigerating crust of the earth, become filled with steam, or gas, from the great laboratory, and naturally disrupt at the point where they approach nearest to the surface—in fact, the weakest locality.*

I do not advance this as anything new, but the explosion and the escape of steam seem to be confirmatory of the most reasonable hypothesis. Unfortunately for science, the ignorance and want of intelligence of the majority who witness these interesting phenomena preclude the chance of any accurate general account. They see nothing but what goes on immediately under their eyes; they think nothing of an earthquake beyond the fact of its disagreeable results in shaking down houses; and one is obliged to cross-question them, and extract, item by item, the few particulars noticed amidst their apathy and want of general observation. However, any little fact from an eye-witness is always valuable, especially on subjects which rarely admit of practical illustration to the philosopher.

In my ignorance of astronomy, I was not aware that the galaxy or milky-way shifted its position, or

* This is the view taken by Humboldt in his "Cosmos."

was in any way dependant on or connected with the winds; yet, according to sailors, the milky-way indicates the direction of the wind! or at least, the quarter from which it may be expected within twenty-four hours. The astral zone therefore, according to nautical observers, must be movable!

A few words about flying-fishes (*Exocetans volitans*). These certainly *do* fly, and like swallows, regularly beat to windward. It is by no means a mere leap out of the water, but they crest many successive "seas," and fly in shoals across the bows, as the cut-water of the ship disturbs them. At a little distance, they would look like pieces of writing paper torn into little bits and thrown overboard—but that they plash in the water like musket-balls, each throwing up a miniature spray. Flying-fish differ much in size in different latitudes. Comparatively speaking we saw very few of them during the passage—or indeed of any other inhabitant of the deep, much fewer than from the description of many authors I should have conceived possible. Occasionally we saw a whale spout, but generally speaking in cool weather fishes do not rise to the surface, but seem to be attracted there only by a bright sun. For myself, I expected to have seen in the tropics shoals of dolphins and of sharks following the ship for days together; yet, although I watched incessantly, I never saw even so much as the fin of a shark, until the before-mentioned small one was hauled on board. Sailors say that seeing many fishes at sea is the

1

exception not the rule, and that in many voyages they have not observed one.

As is usually the case in small vessels, we had no chronometer on board, so we worked by "dead reckoning" and taking an observation now and then; owing to this we were on the morning of the thirtieth day looking out for Barbadoes over the lee-quarter, when turning round, we discovered the island dimly looming through the mist ten miles to *windward* of us! We were down to the northward with a strong current against us and a chopping sea, so we had a dead beat all day and night. The morning of the 21st at day-break found us lying along the land two miles distant, and at seven o'clock, A.M., we anchored in Carlisle Bay, in front of Bridgetown, Barbadoes. The West Indies at last! on the thirty-second day from the wharf at Baltimore!

The quarantine boat came alongside and gave us pratique. Two or three well-dressed nigger ladies came off to try for "de pleasure ob washing for us," but that speculation failed. These ladies were cautious as well as industrious, and whilst holding on by a painter, waiting our pleasure, they dropped into the sea a stout triangular wire, having on it a row of baited hooks; first, however, carefully scanning the now *green* depths with a "I hope dere is no sharks." The white bottom was distinctly visible at a considerable depth.

CHAPTER II.

BRIDGETOWN—THE NEGRO POPULATION—THE MERCANTILE CLASSES—MISS BETSY AUSTIN—BARBADIAN VENUS—NEGRO COSTUME—THE MARKET—THE NEGRO CHARACTER—THE CATHEDRAL.

THE negro population of Bridgetown is by far the most impudent that I ever saw in any part of the world; and on landing at the quay, we were absolutely besieged by a crowd of sturdy niggers, called by the Barbadians, "outlaws," wretches bearing in their faces the most glaring indications of depravity. One of these *pariahs* even went so far as to lay hands on me, and I shook him off with difficulty. This is the welcome which greets every stranger on landing at Barbadoes, because, as strangers only, can these hyenas hope to take advantage of the ignorance of the new arrival, and demand for luggage one dollar instead of the quarter of a dollar to which they would be entitled. I had been previously warned, so came prepared.

We made our way to the boarding-house of Mrs.

Roach, to which unfortunately (as it turned out) I had been recommended. I say unfortunately, as the place was infested by some very undesirable visitors. But further on I shall give a regular catalogue *raisonnée* of all the boarding-houses in the capital of Barbadoes.

To one who like myself had been in the Levant, Bridgetown did not by any means seem so strange as it probably would have done to those who had left England for the first time. It is not unlike the Frank quarter of a Mahommedan city, though the general character of the town is more or less Italian, modified by something that reminds one of the East. The streets are narrow, and the houses low, and covered with stucco of various tints, usually buff; and the plaster falling off from alternate damp and sun, leaves dark ugly patches, which give a dilapidated look. The drawing-room floor of many of the stores (shops) have green verandahs, and *jalousies* carefully closed up, which give the balconies a secluded Eastern aspect, whilst to a stranger the absolutely unintelligible jargon of the negroes produces more the feeling of being in Africa than even Egypt does.

Of course the first thing that a stranger is likely to notice, is the startling preponderance of the blacks over the whites. The labouring people are negroes of every tint, from the darkest chocolate to the sickliest lemon colour—their jabber or “patter” (*patois*) rings in the ear from every direction. Being myself exceedingly quick in acquiring a “language,” I occasionally

detected a word or two of English, but by no means sufficient to understand the context of a conversation as heard in the street. The negroes of the United States are infinitely more intelligible. Their characteristics are extremely ludicrous, and they are horribly ignorant and superstitious. In Barbadoes they are extremely impudent, and would be insufferable were it not that they form as dense a population as the Chinese, and the consequent competition for employment forces the mass to keep within the bounds of an equivocal civility. Those who believe they have nothing to expect from you throw off this restraint.

With the exception of a few of the leading mercantile houses, the storekeepers of Bridgetown are the most rapacious set of harpies that it is possible to imagine; they are chiefly Jews and mulattoes, and swindle strangers in a manner that might satisfy even a Greek, or a Yankee. The Jews have a particularly repulsive cast of countenance, which their practices by no means bely. Always one-third, and often one-half more is demanded for their goods than they will take, and the new-comer, ignorant of all this, is sure to be victimised. The stores are small and dark, and crammed with an heterogeneous collection of inferior articles, such as one might see in a country shop of some out-of-the-way English village. Here and there one finds an approximation to a third-rate English shop, in a "London House," or "Dublin and London House," "Northumberland House," or some other appellation, intended to attract the custom of the

natives ; but to an Englishman all seems mean, coarse, and dingy. Indeed, I believe that throughout the West Indies, morality, principle, and cleanliness are at a very low ebb.

I went to visit the great mulatto lioness of Barbadoes, Miss Betsy Austin,* of the "Clarence Hotel," the lady so celebrated by Captain Hall and divers other amusing writers on the Antilles. We found "Betsy" (who is a sort of double-bodied cow) dressed in a loose white wrapper and embedded in an arm-chair, a cripple from elephantiasis, a disease peculiar I believe to the coloured races. Such a hand never before came under my observation. She was enjoying the *otium sine dignitate*, and received our compliments on her celebrity with a dignified sense of their being well merited. "Betsy," who swears, not "by the moon," but in good round "Portsmouth-Pint" terms, we found rather "How come you so?"—to say "drunk" would be ungallant ; but candour compels me to admit that it was something very like it. Scandal says that she is not a disciple of Father Mathew's, nor quite qualified for a Magdalen. Her Hotel is I believe a nonentity now, or at best a mere tavern ; but the old lady still deals in dripstones, guava-jelly, pickles, preserved ginger, and cigars at fifty per cent. above their market value—albeit that she has amassed "something comfortable." Her sister, Miss Caroline Lee, a diminutive mulatto in an enormous turban half as high as herself, is the ruler of another house

* Since dead.

(directly opposit  to ours), where I understand that visitors pay three dollars a day for very meagre accommodation, with an infinity of extras which swell the bill to an enormous amount. This *hospice* is styled "Freemasons' Hall," which to the initiated means much more than meets the eye. The lady is the Venus of the Antilles, and is at present understood to be under the protection of a Mr. B——, who has almost deserted a charming wife and family for this dingy Cyprian goddess. The Freemasons, however, really have a room here. The drollest part of the matter is that, most likely from ignorance, respectable passengers by the steamers take their wives and daughters to a *locale* that one would suppose to be sufficiently notorious, as no one in Barbadoes pretends to be ignorant of the nature of the establishment.

There is a Yankee Ice Establishment in Bridgetown for supplying the city with ice for domestic purposes, and which is itself a dep t for ice-creams, and a *restaurant*. Ice-creams cost twelve half cents, or sixpence English, a small glass.

A great many Yankee habits have crept into the West Indies; and they now calculate in dollars and cents, decidedly an improvement upon the English monetary system, as it is decimal. Shops are called "stores;" and "establishments" of every variety have superseded the more vulgar appellation of bookseller, tailor, or shoemaker's shops; there is even a livery establishment. The West Indians, however, consider themselves "*South Americans*" *as yet*.

Indispensable as it might seem in a place where so many passengers arrive from long voyages, there is not a public warm bath in Bridgetown. There was one established, but it failed for want of support; and for purposes of cleanliness salt-water bathing is very insufficient; whilst at Barbadoes fresh water is at the best brackish, and likely to disagree with strangers. Rain-water filtered is exclusively used for drinking, and that even is usually "tempered" with brandy, merely to *kill the ants*.

In walking through the streets, I could not help remarking the custom which prevails among negresses of carrying the smallest article on their heads, even a wine-bottle, from which cause the head and shoulders of a negress are well thrown back, and the rest of the body sticks out in an extraordinary manner, while their arms swing about in a most ungainly way. They shuffle along in slippers, in a style calculated to make one fancy a Turkish lady striding like a grenadier. Beautiful forms may possibly be preserved, but "beauty and grace" are palpably wanting. There is something very ludicrous to a stranger on seeing a negress in a low dress.

The present race of resident planters have usually been "attorneys," *i. e.* "managers," and have generally supplanted the original lords of the soil—too commonly for their own interests absentees in England. Creole ladies have the character of being un-intellectual—badly educated, and of wretched tempers. As the natives of either sex are not given to reading,

literature is at a discount, and the prevailing tastes are more tawdry than even amongst the Americans. Once heard, the Creole drawl is never forgotten. They positively speak broken English. The Barbadians are familiarly known as "Bimms."

The pleasures of the table are much restricted in Barbadoes, as the island is chiefly supplied with American provisions but one degree above "salt-horse." The native fresh beef is wretched stuff; mutton is tolerable; but though pork is the pride of the island, the breed of pigs is exceedingly small, quite black, and with large heads. The meat of the boar is exclusively eaten, as sow's flesh is considered unwholesome. The butter is but so-so, and the milk very poor and scarce. The fruits of the island are admitted to be very inferior, compared with those of St. Thomas, or many of the other West Indian islands.

London stout is good, and in great abundance, at two dollars a dozen; brandy very good at two shillings and sixpence a bottle; the wine (such as I have tasted) is very hot and bad. The Yankees import into the West Indies flour, peas, beans, butter, salt beef and pork, staves, common furniture, and "notions" of every sort. Indeed it is a common remark here, that the American profit much more by the West Indies than the English do. Jonathan also supplies horses and mules. There is a great West Indian trade with Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and (for ice) Boston. The mules come chiefly from Connecticut.

The Bridgetown market is worthy of notice. It is a

spacious quadrangle, protected from the sun and rain by a corridor, under which sit the dealers of fruits and the finer vegetables. The open centre is appropriated to the coarser and more bulky edibles, as red and white yams, sweet potatoes, &c. In the central space are four rows of that splendid evergreen from which the island derives its name—*Barba-dos* (doubly bearded)—from the various branches of which curious filaments are pendant, and reaching the ground, take root again, and multiply the parent tree *ad infinitum*. The name “bearded,” given it by the Spaniards, is exceedingly appropriate.

The market-place of Bridgetown is, perhaps, the coolest and most agreeable lounge in the city. Part of it is appropriated to meat and fish, amongst which are snappers, a vermillion-coloured fish; queen mullets, also red; gropers; king-fish (often four feet long, with pointed jowls); and the staple of Barbadoes, flying fish, as cheap and plentiful in their season as sprats are in London. I thought them firm even to hardness, and not unlike eels in flavour; but the truth is, that out of the wealthier houses the cookery here is very indifferent. Dolphins are not uncommon in the market.

I walked over the site of the great fire of February, 1845, in which ten acres of buildings were destroyed. Nothing has yet been rebuilt. A vast amount of property was destroyed. It was the work of an incendiary, now in Bridgetown. He is known, but nothing can be proved.

Bridgetown boasts a bronze effigy of Lord Nelson, looking very much as if the marine hero had just tumbled overboard, and been fished up dripping wet, arising from the ridiculous practice of sculptors attempting to generalise modern costume, and make it "classical."

Bridgetown possesses the finest garrison in the West Indies, defended seaward by a succession of low rocky heights, and spreading inland into a spacious plain, over which the officers' quarters are scattered in picturesque regularity, with barracks, and the various military offices incidental to head-quarters. The view to the north-west is bounded by a range of low hills, at a distance, I believe, of about six miles. Skirting the sea-shore, near Hastings, a village, I observed the cactus, the Spanish needles, (*Yacca gloriosa?*) and that beautiful tree, with its glorious scarlet flowers, familiarly known as the lavender bush.

The circle of the garrison forms a spacious race-course. It boasts also a neat theatre, in which the officers, assisted by professional actresses, frequently perform. The house, when crowded, holds "eighty pounds," and the proceeds, after the expenses are deducted, are distributed in charity. There were but two regiments here during my visit—the 23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers, and the 3rd West Indian (a negro) regiment, besides part of two companies of artillery.

Barbadoes is about twenty-five miles in length, by seventeen in breadth, and contains from two hundred

and twenty-five to two hundred and thirty thousand souls,* one-fifth of whom only are white. Of this, Bridgetown, the capital, has "eleven thousand three hundred and sixty-two," according to the census; and in consequence of this dense coloured population, free labour here works tolerably well. The negro knows that he must either work or starve, and the competition being great within the town, the price of labour is kept within reasonable bounds. Yet the country negro will not work more than four days a week, after which he coolly observes: "Got money, Massa, can't work now!" The staple of the island is sugar, which is considered to be the best in the West Indies. For working in a cane-field, for nine hours a day, a labourer, male or female, gets a shilling.

There is no harbour at Bridgetown; Carlisle Bay, about two miles in breadth from Garrison Point to the Canash, being only a roadstead. It is, however, the grand rendezvous for the shipping from all the other islands, so that there are seldom less than from thirty to forty sail in the roads, and often many more, besides two or three ships of war. It is also the first place at which the West Indian steamers touch after leaving Madeira. The anchorage is safe enough during the

* The official census is not believed, as everything is very stupidly done in Barbadoes; the above number is the opinion of the best informed inhabitants: no one seems certain even of the size of the island—some say twenty-one miles by thirteen, others twenty-five by fifteen—but I believe that which I have given to be the closest approximation.

prevailing easterly trade winds, but during the hurricane months, on the approach of the fearful southerly hurricanes, ships are obliged to slip their cables, and get out to sea; for if caught on the coast, then a lea-shore, they are inevitably lost. There is a sort of harbour at Bridgetown, called the Canash, a corruption of careenage, a place where small vessels of forty or fifty tons can be hove down to be examined; but it affords no shelter during the hurricanes, as the sea rolls right in. On the south-east side of the Canash there is a fine stone pier, or breakwater.

Bridgetown has a bishop and an archdeacon, and two Episcopal churches, the Cathedral and St. Mary's, with dissenting places of worship *ad infinitum*.

Barbadoes is probably the least picturesque of the West Indian islands; yet on rambling into the country, I found more here that is strange and beautiful to the eye of a new-comer than I ever saw before—Egypt not excepted. The new and tropical forms of the trees—the pawpaw, mango, plaintain, grape-tree—and in short every one that I observed; and although Barbadoes boasts comparatively few of those most exquisite of all trees, the cocoa-nut palm, yet there are just enough of them to assure the visitor that he is entirely out of Europe and approaching the equator. A cane patch is scarcely so picturesque as a field of Indian corn, but in every direction there are “bits” poetical and beautiful enough to drive a landscape-painter mad, as a life-time would not suffice to paint the whole. All this is heightened by the characteristic

negro houses, the greater part of which are unpainted, and subside into a dark pearly grey, that harmonises admirably with the bright green flora; whilst those huts which are painted, glory in a dark liver colour, exactly resembling the majority of Turkish houses, to which resemblance the *jalousies*, common even to the meanest huts, add considerably. Then the negroes, or rather the "brownies" of the Antilles, for as there are no positive blacks, negro is a misnomer; how perfect do they not render the scene! Their outlandish jabber, their tawdry rags, brimless hats, and in the case of the females, often fine forms, how perfectly in unison with our impressions of "Inle and Yarico," "Paul and Virginia," and the "Cruise of the Midge."

The negroes bear the character of being incorrigible thieves and liars; but though there is great poverty amongst them, there are no mendicants—they are far too proud to beg, but in all such cases supply their wants by stealing. No dependence can be placed on their word. They lie like Yankees, and their colour forms an impenetrable mask through which there is no chance, by anything like expression, of detecting their real feelings. Their ignorance frequently exhibits itself in a ludicrous manner. I heard of the negro foreman of a jury being unable to distinguish between the plaintiff and the defendant! yet any negro who can purchase ten acres of unproductive and therefore cheap ground, is eligible to sit on juries, and to fulfil all the common judicial offices incidental to the possession of

property. There is a host of coloured policemen in Barbadoes who, as might be expected, are notorious for favouring the blacks against the whites. In fact, as the case at present stands, the white man has no chance of fairness against the black subordinate of the law; some of the policemen are known to have been convicted felons from the Penitentiary—the reason being the wretched salaries given (seventy-five pounds a year currency, or fifty pounds English) which no white can live upon.

The new governor, Colonel Reid and suite, arrived on the 8th of December. This is the first *respectable* Governor the Barbadians have had for several years. On one occasion, the wags of Bridgetown went so far as to affix the Union-Jack to the top of the negro hut in Bay Street, in which a former governor was known to be solacing his leisure in the arms of his dingy Dulcinea. What a position for the representative of a British Sovereign! The high domestic character of Colonel Reid is a guarantee that *for the present* such debasing influences are at an end.

Under preceding governors, the negroes were all “ladies and gentlemen,” and addressed each other as “Sir” and “Miss.” If anything was required from a negro or a negress vending a commodity in the streets, no notice would be taken of the call unless it was couched in the most courteous terms: in fact, nothing short of “*Lady* with the fish,” “*Lady* with the yams,” “*Lady* with the guavas,” would be responded to. If one negro called another for a white

person, it will be "*Lady* with the flying-fish, a white woman wants you," "*Lady* with the yams, a buckra wants you." You will hear the dirtiest negro drab, clad in the veriest rags hardly hanging together, addressed by another negro as "*Miss Johnson*," or "*Miss Emily*," whilst, if a white were the subject of conversation, some studiously common appellation would be selected. The negroes hate the whites, and take every opportunity of showing their hatred. What negro capacity really amounts to, has been amply and fairly illustrated in the history of the Republic of Hayti. The mulattoes also appear everywhere to be the same vicious, bad-tempered, and evil-disposed race, having all the bad passions of the negro, with a portion of the intellect of the white.

There are two Radical newspapers in Barbadoes, one of which is edited by a coloured person. They just serve still further to mystify and confuse the woolly sconces of their dingy supporters, but are nevertheless productive of much mischief, and ought to be suppressed. It is surmised, however, and not without some reason, that in a few years the island will be altogether in the hands of the negroes. In fact, freedom in the West Indies will do nothing more for the negroes than incite them to obtain possession of these colonies. They are much healthier here than the whites, and believe that they have more right to the soil than those who by nature are so obviously unfitted for it. This feeling, incessantly stirred up as

it is by coloured demagogues, is very likely to work out its own fulfilment.

The negro is very fond of talking to himself or herself, or at least of publishing in the streets his private opinions on his own private affairs for the benefit of the public at large, and he goes stumbling along in sweet colloquy with himself, seeming every now and then to "put it to you" whether he has been fairly dealt with. The women are particularly prone to this. They appear to have no idea of keeping even their thoughts to themselves, and in fact their character is the strangest *mélange* of childish simplicity and low cunning it is possible to imagine.

There cannot, perhaps, be a better illustration of the negro way of doing any or everything, than a description of the *modus operandi* of washing one's linen in Barbadoes. To continental travellers the "principle" will have become delicately familiar in Paris, Italy, and Greece, as far at least as having had one's shirts beaten to pieces on a flat stone by the side of a rivulet. But this is mere child's play to negro customs. The scene of operation is the sea-shore—the beach here being strewn with rough and jagged pieces of coral rock. Your clothes are washed in *cold sea-water* by being gathered up into a long roll, and then banged as hard as may be against the rugged pieces of rock, to the utter destruction of the material, the marvel being that any linen can withstand for the second time such a fearful ordeal. Occasionally they are rinsed in fresh water, but not always. The shirts,

dreadfully *mangled*, come home as stiff as buckram, having apparently been steeped in gluten, so that you have to tear the sleeves and breast apart before you can get your arms or person into them. This arises from the prevailing opinion that a shirt is scarcely a shirt unless it be as stiff as a board. The moral of this is, that the commonest "slop" shirts, at eight or ten dollars a dozen, are quite good enough for the West Indies. There is a way of getting one's linen kept in good order, but it is one that is not palatable to all persons: it is to maintain friendly relations with a mulatto lady, who then prides herself on your being a credit to the community.

On the 13th of December, I visited the cathedral, a spacious and delightfully cool edifice, but in no other way remarkable than for its associations with home, its glorious old organ, and its galleries filled with charity children, reminding one of some sequestered village church. It is not England, however, for one window of the cathedral commands a graceful coconut tree, waving its fan-like branches in the grateful breeze. Still the spirit of England is here—all that is respectable in the island being within the walls. The coloured people very properly have an ample gallery to themselves, for the odour which they exhale would otherwise be intolerable. The service was performed on the Tractarian principle. The rector preached in his white surplice, and after the sermon, returning to the communion-table, gave us a tiresomely protracted address, to which nobody seemed

to listen—all innovations of very doubtful advantage. The two clergymen were Barbadians, and drawled awfully, pronouncing many words very oddly, as “greet” for “great,” &c.

CHAPTER III.

MODE OF LIVING—DANGEROUS BATHING—CULTIVATION OF THE
SUGAR-CANE — NEGRO LANDHOLDERS — SOCIAL PESTS — ARBI-
TRARY REGULATION—BARBADIAN VEGETABLES AND FRUIT.

ALTHOUGH with care Barbadoes is tolerably healthy, there is always yellow fever enough (here called "Mulatto Jack,") to remind a person that he is mortal. It is the interest of the "Bimms" to keep this fact very quiet, so that no dependence can be placed on *their* representations. On the 11th of December a lady, a native of the island, died of this fever. Usually the fever results from some overt act of imprudence—sitting in a draught when heated, or exposure to the heavy night dews after a party. So heavy are these dews, that on the clearest night an umbrella is often carried over the head to protect the person from damp. But "fuddling" is, perhaps, a more remote cause of fever than is generally imagined. There is a prejudice here against drinking plain water,

and as, from the heat, much liquid is imbibed during the day, it is always "corrected" with brandy. This beverage, though weak in itself, becomes formidable from the quantity drank. People do not get tipsy, but heated by the alcohol, and the blood becomes inflamed from the daily and yearly repetitions of these practices. The French find *eau sucré*, or raspberry vinegar, a sufficient corrective, without *eau de vie*, which in this climate might rather be called *eau de mort*.

The daily routine of our lives here is a good illustration of the manner of living. We rise rather before than after the dawn; post off, and bathe in the sea, and at seven o'clock get a breakfast-cup of tea or coffee, as may be preferred. At nine A.M. we breakfast on tea, hot meat of some sort, or cold flying-fish, Irish potatoes or yams; in fact we have a regular *déjeuner à la fourchette*. At one there is bread and cheese, and at half-past five we dine—soup, fish, &c. *Irish* potatoes, *sweet* potatoes or yams—but neither greens nor salads, though the latter are abundant, and would be most grateful to Englishmen—no pies, no dessert. At seven P.M., a cup of tea winds up our daily aliment. Wine is not drunk at our table, but cold brandy and water, or sometimes a sort of cold rum punch called "falurnum," a very baneful, heady, bilious drink in great request. London stout or porter is too heavy for the climate, but West India pale ale is in high favour. All malt liquors, however, are very bilious, and injurious to the liver.

The sea-bathing is very fine in Barbadoes—at Fontabelle, half a mile to the west of Bridgetown, is a strip of water, about two hundred yards broad and a quarter of a mile long, protected from the deep sea by a coral reef, over which in most parts the surf breaks. This salt-water lagoon seldom exceeds six feet in depth, more generally being from three to four and a half feet. The bottom is of white sand, and the water exceedingly clear; but although in one part there is a communication with the deep sea, the sharks seldom, I believe, venture into such shallow water. They have been known to do so, however, and there are enormous ones outside, attracted by the offal from the slaughter-houses, which the butchers are by law compelled to heave into the sea at this spot. Be this as it may, nobody seems to fear a visit from “John Shark” inside the reef. The barracouta is another fish of prey that often comes into this lagoon; it is as much or more to be dreaded than the shark; for though only about three feet long, it is more pertinacious in its attacks, and takes a very handsome nip out of a gentleman’s carcass. The conger eel, too, is said to be a frequenter of these bathing establishments. Here, about twenty yards from the beach, wooden bathing-houses, approached by long platforms, are erected, so that from the doors one can plunge into six feet of water, decreasing in depth at pleasure until it is shallow enough for children. To an Englishman the temperature of the water is perfectly delightful, although the inhabitants of the place can seldom get “shock”

enough, without having a bucket of water poured over their relaxed frames. There is no doubt but that a plunge into the sea every fine morning is highly conducive to health. The fee for the use of the bathing-house is a mere trifle (one dollar a month), but casual visitors pay a "fip," or three pence half-penny a time. Few are in the water after sunrise.

For the first three weeks of my stay here the rains were incessant—a shower every five minutes—an occurrence without precedent in the history of Barbadoes, as, though it once was, this is not now the rainy season. The islanders were in raptures at what was believed to be a grateful supply of moisture to the canes, but alas! their joy was short-lived; the canes began to rot, and in one case seventeen acres were destroyed—an extremely heavy loss, as they would have produced at the lowest average thirty-four hogsheads of sugar, each worth twenty pounds sterling, a total of six hundred and eighty pounds. To strangers, the consequences of being caught in a tropical shower are very serious, to say nothing of getting one's clothes spoilt, and slipping about in the white pipeclay mud of Bridgetown. These unseasonable deluges were also productive of much sickness.

The quantity of sugar now made in Barbadoes is much the same as it was before the emancipation, prior to which event thirty thousand hogsheads was the average, although it has amounted to thirty-four thousand, worth thirty pounds each. It now averages about twenty-five thousand hogsheads at twenty pounds

each, only that the hogsheads are larger, each weighing twenty hundred pounds, or one ton, whereas formerly the weight was but fifteen hundred. It will be seen that the price is much reduced.

Within the previous eighteen months there had been a blight amongst the cocoa-nut trees by which the greater number were destroyed; and sad indeed is it in Barbadoes to see the branches of these beautiful trees hanging down in withered desolation, a prey to an insect of the tribe *aphis*, so extremely minute, as only to be detected by the microscope. By this the incomes of many persons have been seriously compromised. They don't plant again, "because the trees are so long in coming to perfection!"

Leaving out the Barbadians proper, the white population of Bridgetown is a curious mixture of low Irish and many Scotch, with a very few English. There are also several Bermudians settled here. None of these people rise above the third class in England, all being shopkeepers, shopmen, and clerks to the various merchants, and, as might be imagined from such a set, the general tone of society is very low. These persons are extremely fond of hoaxing strangers, and of taking unheard-of liberties with such as submit to it. At first I felt extremely grateful for what I believed to be useful local information, until a gentleman, whom events proved to be kinder than the rest, whispered me that my informants had boasted of the way in which they had been hoaxing me. Once on my guard, I was not easily imposed upon.

The "Bimms" of every degree were described to me by a British officer, who knew them well, and on whose word I could rely, as a miserably mean, narrow-minded race, who thought of nothing but making sugar, eating pork and sweet potatoes, and riding about in a buggy. The good old West Indian planter of former times, associated in our minds with the hearty, hospitable gentleman, has no existence now, the planter of the present day being usually an attorney or manager, who has swindled his employer, and crept into his shoes; or some shopkeeper, who by the command of ready money has had mortgages on the estates, which, in consequence of the deterioration of property, were too heavy to be redeemed, and thus by degrees the plantations have fallen into bad hands.

Some of the Bridgetown shopkeepers are importers from England and elsewhere; and, although they keep little paltry retail shops in the colonies, pass off in England as "West India merchants." One person of this description, Mr. P——, lives in Portman Square (London), the shop in Barbadoes being the most miscellaneous assemblage of crockery, straw-bonnets, wine, tapes and ribbons, that it is possible to imagine. To do them justice, however, they sell very good articles; and, as far as I know, are very honest.

To a person arriving from the States, there is no change more striking than the difference of character and manner in the English gentlemen, who happen to be sojourners in these islands. Tradesmen are pretty

much alike in feeling all the world over ; and those of Bridgetown are not greatly higher than their brethren of the United States. But in the officers of the various garrisons, the clergy, the governor, and a sprinkling of English official persons, stipendiary magistrates, &c., to be found in most of these islands, there is the same frankness that has become the characteristic of Englishmen of a certain class, and the absence of which class in America is a privation for which no worldly advantages can compensate : though the lion may live in a sty, he can never become a pig. In point of classification, the Barbadians proper hold the lowest rank of all the inhabitants of the British West Indies, and are considered to be the most grovelling in spirit.

It was a great mistake to allow negroes to acquire in the colonies anything beyond personal property. The negro saves money—*all* negroes can save money—and invests it in land, in fact becomes a small proprietor ; and being his own, he cultivates this land very carefully, living on less than half the produce, and finding a ready market for the rest. He gives no credit, and so has no bad debts, but gets the money down. He wants no tea or coffee, and makes no disbursements like the white ; but can exist almost entirely on the produce of his land. Thus by small degrees he hems in the large plantations, and becomes himself a large landed proprietor. This is taking place not merely on one spot, but all over the island. The negro hates the white man, and anticipates with

glee the time when, sooner or later, the colony *must* belong to the coloured people. He monopolizes all the negro labour, and gets his work done in preference to the white planter, for these people are cunning enough to combine and to hang together. The grounds of the white planter lie uncultivated for want of labourers, who will only work for him at a ruinous rate, and the estate *must fall*. This the negro knows very well, and watching his opportunity, he, with the ready money, pounces on as much of the spoil as he can obtain. All this might have been avoided by preventing the negroes from holding land: then they *must* either have laboured for the whites (at a far higher remuneration than any other peasant on earth can obtain) or have quitted the colony, which they know better than to do. To say that, after emancipation, the negroes were in the same relative position to the rest of the community that white serfs would have been in a similar event, could only have been asserted by one quite ignorant of the subject.

The Barbadian negroes have a great dislike to be called by the whites "niggers," although towards each other they use the word freely as a term of disparagement. "She is de most worthless nigger in all de town, de most worthless," said a young black lady, in my hearing, *talking to herself*. You will see a fellow, himself as black as a saucepan, shaking his fist at "dose lazy niggers." It must be observed that the word "negro" would be equally offensive with "nigger," which is merely West Indian nomenclature,

"We is coloured people," being the reproving correction.

A negro was recently sentenced to be hung for the cool and deliberate murder of another negro, and had the sentence not been carried into execution it would have been "a political blunder," as from the length of time that they had been allowed to commit all sorts of crime with impunity, the negroes came to the conclusion that the whites dare not hang them! It appears that all the negroes in the streets and elsewhere, in Barbadoes, carry knives or razors; and if they get into a quarrel, out come these weapons, although they do not often use them. Surely they should be prohibited from possessing arms. In this instance the murdered man was a watchman, guarding his master's canes. The murderer, desirous of stealing them, thinking that it would be the readiest way first to get rid of the watchman, approached him quietly, and with his knife stabbed him in the side. He was hanged on the reef; but the negroes looked very fierce about it, fearing that at length their ill-permitted reign of impunity was over.

I know of no place, not even Paris, in which it behoves a man to be so careful who he allows to get acquainted with him as at Barbadoes. It would seem that the colonies are full of scamps, British and native, who have either made Great Britain "too hot to hold them," or have done something to make the people of the place shy of them; and these adventurers are always on the look-out to fasten on strangers. Such

people being apparently free and frank in their manner, though only unblushing impudence, are calculated to throw a new-comer off his guard, as it is so natural to be free and frank to those who *seem* to be so to us. True that their real character soon shows itself, but an acquaintance once made, is extremely difficult to shake off; and if you make a vigorous effort and succeed, you are sure to get more or less ill-will, as of necessity they are extremely low-minded, and also furious at finding themselves exposed. The gentleman who kindly warned me of the character of one of these fellows, had *his riding-whip cut in half* as it hung against the wall!

Unfortunately, for some years past the colonies seem to have been considered as a convenient sanctuary for official defaulters or judicial scamps, or adventurers of lower degree, who have been pushed into offices here, which, if only for the sake of example, should have been filled by men of character. Let us hope that a new era is about to dawn on these almost benighted places.

The Barbadians are very American in their ideas. There is the same hyper-pretension to morality as in America, with a startling degree of immorality; and whilst they pride themselves on being more civilized than the other West Indian islands, there was not even a map of the West Indies to be got at any bookseller's in Bridgetown! Though a large maritime town, there was not a nautical instrument maker in the place, nor a place where a chart could be purchased, nor even a place where I could replace a thermometer that I had

broken. I did, however, see a barometer at an iron-monger's. The town is crammed with linen-draper's, and with women's gear of every description, as cheap as in England. Plenty of dress, but scarcely anything of a higher class. The profligacy of the white men with the mulatto women is universal, and in many ways contaminates the ideas of the white Barbadians, male and female, making them very lax.

Our house is opposite to that of Caroline Lee, which is sometimes dignified with the appellation of the "Royal Hotel;" and it is really shocking to witness the manner in which the passengers by the West Indian and colonial steamers are beset by gangs of boisterous, swearing, brawling negroes, who literally besiege the doors. At an early hour of the morning, I counted no less than ten waiting for their prey, wrangling and blaspheming. No stranger can leave the house without being followed by three or four impudent lads of sixteen or eighteen, to show him the way to any place, so that to walk out, even for a few yards, unaccompanied by these vagabonds, is impossible. The negroes have imbibed an idea—and a very dangerous one it is, for people of such small intellect and physically strong frames to take up—that commit what crime they may, "Queen Victoria won't hang them."

Christmas Day opened with a slashing rain squall. For the previous month the deluging rains had been something quite unusual. In the other islands they were as bad, and they were dreadfully unhealthy, particularly St. Kitts, St. Thomas's, and Trinidad. A week before, twelve people died daily at St. Kitts, a

very small island, and the deaths began to increase here. A wetting in the West Indies kills a white, or at the least gives him fever, but the negroes patter about in the rain with impunity.

Those acquainted with Barbadoes, its customs, and, above all, its prices, know how shockingly the poor passengers and strangers generally are plundered at the different hotels of the place. There is no mercy shown them; all is extortion. Mulatto rapacity is far worse than Italian, or even Dutch! Guava jelly, ginger preserves of any sort, pickles of mountain cabbage, or any little novelty common to the country, and really of little value or moment, are kept at all the mulatto hotels, and retailed to strangers at five hundred per cent. above their value. Any one who took a shop in Bridgetown could get these things prepared by negroes, or do it themselves, as there is no art required, and by selling them at a fixed price, and a moderate profit, would make a fortune. In itself, Barbadoes is not a dear place, it is only made so to strangers.

I left the boarding-house of Mrs. Roach on the 26th of December, and went to the house of a coloured family, *nearly* as white as whites, but here, in colonial society, belonging to the proscribed race. However, as it was strictly a private family, and could not possibly be worse than the one I had left, but might be better, I thought it worth the chance, since nothing could exceed in lowness of feeling and vulgarity the visitors of Mrs. Roach's establishment. Long before the dinner-table was vacated, the vagabond "familiar," hat

on head, and smoking, intruded upon the boarders. Then came cards and drinking, with its *sequitur* amongst this class, wrangling. Long before this point I would retire to my own room.

Barbadoes is considered to be by far the least interesting of the Antilles. There is a hilly part of the island called "Scotland," said to be one thousand one hundred feet above the sea.

There is one preposterous regulation in Barbadoes—it is that all persons who have been longer than four-and-twenty hours on the island must have a "pass" to enable them to quit it, and vessels refuse to take you without one, or at least they make a great demur and favour of it, and even then you are smuggled off, which respectable people do not like, nor is it agreeable to put themselves under such weighty obligations to mere strangers. The passport is only to be obtained by putting up your name for *twenty-one days* in the Secretary's office, paying a small fee, or by getting two housekeepers to be responsible for any debts that you may have contracted, paying as a fee twelve bits, or five shillings and twopence. Now, how are sheer strangers, not knowing a soul in the place whom they would choose to ask, to call upon two substantial housekeepers to be bond for them, at the risk of such bondsmen being compelled to pay all their debts? for although it is never exacted, the penalty incurred by the captain of a ship, for taking any passenger on board without a pass, is ten thousand pounds sterling, for which he signs a bond, or paying any debts that his passenger


may have contracted, which, in such cases, is always enforced. The object of this regulation is to prevent people who have been in business in Barbadoes from running off in debt ; but twenty-one days is too long a time for transient visitors, and falls most seriously on strangers like myself, who have no transactions with the inhabitants.

I heard it said that "every facility was given by the authorities to strangers quitting the island." I can only say that, as a stranger, on applying to the Secretary's office, I was simply informed of the rules, and that they were imperative ; and as my stay was protracted somewhat longer than I expected, and not knowing a soul to whom I could have the face to apply as security, I put up my name, and stayed out the twenty-one days, or rather twenty-three days, as the day on which the name is put up, and that on which the time expires, does not count. A pass once obtained, however, is good for the whole of the current year ; so that a rogue, procuring a pass in January, has eleven months clear to get as far into debt as he can, and then run off on the 31st of December, and get away with impunity.

The flora of even this island is entirely different from that of Europe ; almost every tree, every leaf, every mass of foliage, varies from that of the Old World, and contrasts most exquisitely with each other ; but to those unaccustomed to make this branch of landscape painting their peculiar study, the trees are extremely troublesome to draw and (in water-colours) to tint. A

tour through the islands, and a series of faithful views and "bits" in the West Indies, would, I think, well repay a clever and enterprising young artist; but it would require him to be accurate, or the infinity of visitors to the Antilles would not think the engravings from his drawings worth the purchase. A work like that of "Constantinople," as illustrated by Allom and Bartlett, would assuredly be a profitable speculation. The date palm (not the cocoa-nut palm) is African, the aloe and the cactus are both common to Sicily and the Levant. The rest seem to me entirely different. The negroes dry their clothes on one of the most characteristic shrubs of Barbadoes — the Spanish needles, each long narrow leaf of which is terminated by a red spine, nearly as sharp and as strong as a needle. I don't know what *genera* it comes under, but the leaves, which are edged with spines, seem to make it a species of miniature aloe.

The fruits to be purchased in the market of Barbadoes are, in a general way, much inferior to those of Europe. The banana is in taste very like a too mellow pear, losing its flavour from rottenness, and quite inferior to our jourgonelle, burgundy, or other of our best pears. The orange (*green* outside, when ripe) is not at all equal to the blood-orange of Palermo, or even to the yellow-fleshed orange of the same city. The grape-fruit, somewhat larger than the orange, is not sweet, but like a lemon that has nearly lost its acidity; it is, in fact, almost flavourless, neither an orange nor quite a lemon, and by strangers would



only be tasted from curiosity. The sweet-lemon, sometimes called "forbidden fruit," is of the same tribe, but larger still, and equally inferior. There is a little miserable fruit, a sort of bastard crab-apple, here called "dunks," which is, in fact, a crab-apple without flavour. The water-lemon, quite new to Europeans, is a yellow fruit, about the size of a large egg-plum, and is in reality a gourd, or allied to the melon tribe rather than to the lime. The rind is thick, and is not peeled, but, one end being cut off, the contents are squeezed through. It is filled with dark grey seeds, enveloped in yellow gelatine, having somewhat the flavour of *absinthe*, a *liqueur* not at all to my taste. It is sufficiently sweet, but after curiosity is once satisfied, I doubt an Englishman purchasing any from preference for the fruit: at any rate it would be quite an acquired taste. This fruit seems, however, to be much prized here, as six of them cost two bits (tenpence), a very high price for fruit in this country.

The pa-paw (*Carica papaya*) is a species of melon, mawkishly sweet, but, in spite of its tropical name, with little flavour. The tree, whilst bearing, grows to about six feet in height, and has singularly arranged leaves. It is very prolific, commencing to bear when a year old, and continuing fruitful for four years, after which, though it springs up to twelve feet, the leaves wither, save a few at the very top, which give it a very characteristic look. Being an aperient, the pa-paw is, when rationally used, very wholesome; and here, *en passant*, let me give strangers

a hint. Most of the fruits of hot countries are aperients, a beautiful provision of nature, to keep the system in order ; but when abused, as fruits generally are by new-comers, they produce flux. The same wiseacre, who would reasonably call a man mad for taking at one dose a pint of black draught, or a whole box of Hunt's pills, will, in a fruit country, stuff himself with fruit to twice that comparative quantity, and then wonder to find his very agreeable aperient disagree with him. Those who know Naples or the Levant well, will understand the difference between the use and abuse of fresh figs, either green or purple. In a hot country, look upon every fruit as a medicine, and you will do well.

The sour sop, one of the best fruits that I have tasted in Barbadoes, is of a dark apple-green colour, and in form like a huge, misshapen pear, six inches high, and two pounds in weight, covered with soft, obtuse prickles. It is a sort of porcupine pear, and though unpromising enough to look at, is of an agreeable, delicate acid. The inside is a very juicy white pulp, somewhat stringy, having interspersed through it sundry dark oblong seeds. It is said to be a very wholesome fruit, which, as it contains an extremely powerful acid, I can readily believe. A fine one cost me in the market a tip (threepence-halfpenny).

The yam is the potato of the Tropics,* and I think

* It must not be overlooked that the potato is indigenous to South America, from whence it was introduced into England by (I believe) Sir Walter Raleigh.

an improvement on that root. When boiled, and cut in slices, yam could hardly be distinguished by the eye from turnip; but it is far better when roasted. Like most of the roots and grain designed by nature for the staple food of man, and like water for a beverage, the yam has little or no flavour, so that it does not tempt one to eat to repletion, but it is never nauseating or tiring, as strongly-flavoured edibles sooner or later become. The green plantain is another tropical vegetable, which, when roasted, is very hard, and in flavour not unlike a roasted chestnut, though far inferior, and when boiled, is somewhat like a parsnip in flavour. The sweet-potato, though better here than in the United States, is not particularly tempting to an English palate. A very hard shot-like green pea, called pigeon-pea, which never boils soft, is used for stewing in soup. It is far tougher than anything we can understand by old peas.

Where the flora of a country is so new as that of the Tropics is to Europeans, and generally so interesting, it would be impossible to particularize all, unless it were in a scientific work; but one or two deserve a passing notice, and of these, perhaps, the cabbage-tree holds the first rank. I examined a dozen before I was aware that it was not the coconut palm, and was somewhat astonished to find that my "coconut" turned out to be a "cabbage," a tree that I had so earnestly desired to see. It is really a palm; the grand distinction is, that the upper part of the cabbage-palm is of a bright apple-green, set

on to the stem, yet quite distinct from it, in the shape of a balustrade. The foliage is more compact, wilder in its waving, of a darker green, and coarser, whilst one pointed shoot is thrown out at the top, quite bare of foliage. The trunk too is smooth and grey, and somewhat gouty in its form, whilst that of the cocoa-nut palm is serrated like the coat of a zebra; the cabbage is also a taller and more noble-looking tree. Once pointed out, one can never again be confounded with the other. At the junction of the green part of the cabbage-palm with the stem, some withered leaves may always be observed. This, and the green baluster, are the characteristics of the tree. A pickle is made of the leaves of the green stem, but in Barbadoes, at least, the cabbage is never cut, which is sometimes said to be done in the other islands, when the whole tree is destroyed, an act of extravagance which the Barbadians know better than to perpetrate.

The next tree that attracts the notice of a stranger is the plantain, whose broad and noble leaves, so gracefully ruffled by the passing breeze, instantly captivate his fancy. It blends, too, with all our associations of tropical romance, from "Paul and Virginia" to "Otaheite." The leaves of the plantain are serrated, and tear with the action of the wind, so that it looks all in rags.

In contrast with this, there is the bamboo tree, with its tall straight stem and scanty twigs, which shoot up as sparsely as the isolated hairs on a bald man's head, or an elephant's back. This is a curiosity

if only from contrast, but every step offers such striking dissimilarities. The grape tree, with its broad, round leaves ; and that most graceful of trees, a young coconut palm, before it can boast of a stem at all springing out of the ground, and all plume. To these must be added the cactus, the aloe, and that spicular bush, the Spanish needles. The manchineel, the upas of the West Indies, abounds in Barbadoes. It is in no way remarkable in appearance, and with those not aware of its deleterious properties, would pass for a very innocent member indeed of the vegetable kingdom. Its fruit is about the size and colour of a potato-apple.

CHAPTER IV.

A JOE AND JOHNNY—THE BELLE OF THE DANCE—THE BIMMS—
NEGRO DWELLINGS—ELEPHANTIASIS—BOARDING-HOUSES IN
BRIDGETOWN.

THE Christmas holidays were such thoroughly drenching days, that negro splendour was for the time annihilated, but on the first fine day the festivities commenced. Hearing that a "Joe and Johnny" was to be held at a place called Cullummore Rock, a short distance from Bridgetown, I resolved to attend it. I found the locality, however, with some difficulty, having been directed to the Roebuck, a place where dancing *à la mode* was to be carried on in a house; whereas a "Joe and Johnny," being a real negro dance, is always held in the open air.

The "Tum-tum" was an old familiar sound, and guided by its spirit-stirring thump, I found a numerous assemblage of ladies of colour, forming a ring in the unenclosed "back-yard" of a negro

hut, being in fact a plot of ground behind the house. The ladies were provided with seats, though the negro gentlemen present were permitted to stand ; but as it is an understood thing that a buckra gentleman will pay twice the usual charge, I was quickly accommodated on a sofa, where I was jammed in with two very dark chocolate ladies, highly scented with eau de Cologne and musk, a very desirable precaution.

Our music consisted of fiddles, with a rude African-looking tambourine, savouring very much of the savage ; a "tum-tum," or "tump," a piece of parchment stretched over what seemed to be a small iron-hooped pail, a utensil which I religiously believe it to have been ; and "de shot," a small gourd, as large as an orange, filled I understood with shot, and having a handle. This was the property of the "funny man," who rattled it against his hand, and screamed a sort of song, which gave the initiated much delight, but was quite unintelligible to me. The tum-tum was played by an alternate thump of the open-handed knuckles on the parchment, and then a slap of the palm on the wood. The object of the dance was to show the paces of the ladies to the admiring beaux, and a couple of dark beauties paid their "quaar-ter dollah" each and commenced. The first movement was an *en avant* by both, the feet close together toeing and heeling it very gently, the *retirez* the same ; then the feet were straddled in a somewhat indecorous manner for ladies, moving along and round *à la fandango*, with a motion similar to that exceed-

ingly droll one used by tragic actors in a booth, "bent on deeds of blood," who sidle up to their victims by an alternate action of the heels and ball of the foot, without lifting their pedal extremities off the ground. Here, however, the ladies turned down the outer ankles as near the earth as possible, meanwhile advancing and retiring together, and then "slueing round" each other, holding up their frocks *à la minuet de la cour*, with their heads looking down at their feet. These were the grand postures of the dance—an indispensable requisite which also seemed to be a solemn cast of countenance, occasionally varied by a sentimental inclination of the head, as doleful in face, however, as if the parties were to be hanged the next minute. The dance was short enough for the money: the music stopped abruptly, and in a minute or two another pair of aspirants for public approbation went through the same evolutions. I must not omit to remark that the feet did *not* take the most active part in the dance, as that was executed by a prominent part of the person, commonly understood to be that peculiarly African development on which "Honour holds her seat." That wriggle transcends description: none but itself could be its parallel.

At last, a tall, "lengthy" mulatto beau had the gallantry to lead out a lady, for whom he also paid a "quarter." This gentleman wore a black hat rakishly planted on one side, Byron shirt-collar, very short round jacket of dark green, and long white duck unmentionables, fitting very tightly to his person, and

looking altogether very like a daddy-long-legs. His boots were of white jean, tipped at the extreme toe and heel with patent leather. The *nonchalance* of this dun-coloured *élégant* was admirable, as with arms a-kimbo, the palms of the hand turned outward, he shuffled, *chasséed* and *déchasséed*, toed and heeled, and went through all the steps as accurately as do "my lord and my lady" on May Day. A coloured sailor followed, and he too had white jean boots, with patent leather "appointments." Some of the ladies found it more convenient to dance without shoes or stockings. The queen of the ballet was a tall, extremely thin, wrinkled mulatto of seventy (to judge from looks). She had on a white semi-turban, in which were stuck three cornelian brooches, at the most convenient distances for display; gold ear-rings; several chains of the same material round her scraggy neck; and rings *ad infinitum* on her fingers. She evidently belonged to the old school, when dancing *was* dancing, and seemed to take great pride in displaying to the rising generation how the thing ought to be done. She rejoiced in black shoes, and (white) flesh-coloured silk stockings. The master of the ceremonies was a very dark negro in a white straw hat, with ribbon to match. He rather adroitly elbowed those ladies out of the circle who were not likely to contribute their pences (threepence-halfpenny). The mistress of the *fête* was a huge negress of forty, dressed in virgin white, and profusely decorated with gold ornaments, having also conspicuously tucked into her ample

bosom, and hanging down so that its glories might be fully displayed, a cambric handkerchief, edged with lace, and embroidered with what I believe ladies call "tatting," i. e. holes in all the corners. This splendid appendage was evidently the insignia of office.

At intervals lemonade was handed round, and to those who liked something stronger, a crimson liqueur. Then came a tray with liberal supplies of cake, accompanied by a decanter stand to collect the contributions. Curiosity induced me to taste the lemonade and cake, both of which were in reality exceedingly good.

The ladies, visitors, and *ballarine* were worth coming to see. The majority were regular negresses, with low dresses, soot-coloured skins, coarsely grained, and dressed mostly in white, or very light colours, trimmed with pink or blue, in circles à l'*Espagnol*. The *élite* had white handkerchiefs on their heads, rather elegantly arranged, and sparkling with all the (gold) ornaments they could lay hands on, their necks, arms, and hands teeming with *négligées*, armlets, bracelets, and rings. Others wore handkerchiefs on their heads, the predominant colour being crimson, relieved with stripes of green and yellow; in these, to such as could get them, were stuck men's pearl shirt pins. The belle of the afternoon was a tall, well-formed mulatto "ladeé" from Trinidad, dressed in the extreme of French negro taste, with enormous gold ornaments, a white head-kerchief, radiant with gems, probably mock, and a really elegant muslin

slip, with another garment indescribable by one who has been three years out of Europe. It was in form like a winter article of dress worn by Russian ladies of rank, hanging very loosely down the back, and reaching about as low behind as a sailor's "monkey jacket." She was a splendid Yarico, with a dignified, but slightly disdainful expression, as if she scorned the vulgar "Joe and Johnny set out." The dingy empress was known as the "French ladeé," though whether she spoke the French language or not I could not ascertain.

All were dressed in their best, and the greatest decorum prevailed; though, alas! I fear from some expressions which I overheard, that it went but little beyond the externals of things.

When negro ladies do wear shoes and stockings, they are extremely particular about them. One dark beauty went into a shop in Bridgetown to purchase a pair of flesh-coloured silk stockings, on which the waggish shop-keeper handed her a pair of black ones, a personality at which she was exceedingly indignant. The long heel is an indication of negro blood, even after the colour of the flesh would mystify a European, as many of the colonial coloured varieties are fairer than Portuguese or Spaniards. However, society here is sealed to all who have the slightest tinge of colour, and that in houses where the vulgarity and want of education is all on the side of the white. Society in Barbadoes (excepting among the military) is a nucleus of tradesmen, by no means higher in manner or feeling

than the generality of the same craft elsewhere, being full of the vulgar importance of meanly acquired wealth. Many of these "grandees" keep hucksters' shops on a large scale, or what in England would be understood as Italian warehouses, and are as consequential as so many churchwardens or parish overseers could be; in fact, there are only three or four houses in Barbadoes which have any pretensions to take rank as British merchants: such are Messrs. Cavan and Co., Higginson, Deane, and Stott; Hardy and Co.; Moore and Co. The rest are mere shopkeepers.

The new year opened with exceedingly hot weather, so that umbrellas were required to shield one from the sun. At five, A.M., the sea was a tepid bath. Cold was only in dreams! yet this was the cool season, forsooth; and you heard people say, "The water's nice and cool this morning!"

I went on New Year's Day, in the evening, to another "Joe and Johnny." When I arrived, the rays of a sickly moon were gleaming on the broad-leaved plantain which waved over the heads of the dancers; some were of the πολλοί—no fine madams—no jewellery—no Eau de Cologne—but negro girls, few of whom boasted shoes or stockings—most of them their everyday rags, and everyday smell. This was the "real thing." How the band did work!—how they stamped, and wagged their heads in all the extasies of intense excitement, feeling to the full as much delight as the dancers. The figure of the dance was perhaps more apparent than before—the *en avant*

deux, the *retirez*, and what we should call a "set" to each other, the arms (holding the frock) wagging up and down, much as we see done in the negro dances on the stage. No one within the witchery of the music could keep still. Black nymphs, sleek as moles, showed by their contortions, how impossible it was. Arms involuntarily went up and down, and dark feet writhed like eels, whilst outside the legitimate circle a dozen couples were clandestinely profiting by the music to gratify their genuine negro propensities. This was dancing with *the soul* in it, and even the little black boys improved the occasion. I never could have imagined any thing so universal. St. Vitus seemed to pervade the whole company. With respect to the music, a triangle was added to the instruments of the preceding "Joe and Johnny," and the "tump" was different in form to the first.

Bridgetown is full of picturesque "bits," of which, however, it is difficult to avail one's-self. I made a sketch of a spot which promised to be romantic—*on paper*.

There are few parts of the world, controlled by Europeans, in which so little is done with so much noise, and so many means and appliances to boot, as in the West Indies. There is a miserable race of diminutive dun-coloured oxen used as beasts of burthen, ten or twelve of which will be put into a cart to draw a load such as any two stout English cart-horses would manage with ease. To these there will at least be three drivers, hooting like demons. Barbadoes seems

as full of such ox-teams as Smyrna is full of strings of camels, and the long lines of oxen are almost as annoying to meet. Mules also are often used, as they stand the climate better than horses. A gang of six or eight negroes will be employed to haul a truck (generally loaded with timber), by two stout ropes attached to the machine, which elsewhere would only employ two men.

There is nothing systematic in West Indian domestic life—no order—things seem to be all at “sixes and sevens,” and entirely through the idleness and want of arrangement of servants. Breakfast will be one morning at nine o’clock, and the next at ten; dinner at five o’clock one day, and at seven the day after; or perhaps your cook does not come at all, and at the eleventh hour you must put up with a make-shift dinner. When these people were slaves, things were very different.

I had a long conversation about the “Bimms,” with a gentleman* who has been twelve years in Barbadoes; by his account the best of the Bimms are as mean and unprincipled as the Yankees, and, like them, have the most overwhelming opinion of themselves, and of their importance in the world. Indeed, I was several times struck with the many points of resemblance between their characters, which I had noticed myself. He says that the Barbadians hate the English, and that he has heard many of the most respectable “Bimms”

* For obvious reasons I do not mention his name.

say, that in case of a war between the two countries, they would immediately hoist the Yankee flag, *par nobile fratrum*. He says that in all business transactions they are as paltry and dirty as the most shuffling Connecticut man, evading payment of the debts they contract by devices that would shame a pettifogger of the lowest class. He regretted ever having come to the country.

This statement has been virtually confirmed by every Englishman with whom I have conversed, and who has been long enough on the island to entitle him to give an opinion. G——, who was collecting his debts in order to return to England, and who is a most respectable and conscientious character, told me from time to time how meanly they shuffled him.

I saw in the market some exceedingly curious looking fishes, here called chub, which seem, as far as colour goes, to be to fishes what parrots are to birds. They are of a dull apple-green, darkening towards the back and tail to a mazarine-blue, and have round the gills a very bright vermillion line, and also one or two of bright yellow, all very decided colours, giving the fish a look so artificial as to seem as if it were a badly painted sign, designed to hang over the door of a fishing tackle shop. On inquiry, I found it to be but little esteemed as food. On civilly asking the negro fish-monger what the fish was called, he with a sneer said, "Pilot-fish, Sar," at which attempt at hoax all the negro bystanders grinned. This is not a bad or uncommon specimen of the impudence of the Barbadian

negroes. One thing, however, I must say in their commendation : I have continually seen in the early morning negro men and women of the lowest class cleaning their teeth (with their fingers) before the doors of their huts, an operation I suspect very rarely, if ever, performed by the labouring classes in England. In a shop also I was much amused by one of two negro belles engaged in purchasing artificial flowers, trying the effect of a brilliant bunch on the complexion of her companion ; nor was the selection by any means a bad one, being a posy of very bright blue, very bright vermillion, and very bright yellow flowers, which, however gaudy, contrasted extremely well with the dark bronze of the giggling lass. To say the truth the negro women of Barbadoes have infinitely better taste in dress than any American lady I ever saw ; indeed, many of the negresses in their best were really elegantly dressed, *à l'Espagnol*, though the effect was marred by their black skin.

John Bull is a funny animal ! He plays at cricket in Barbadoes. I asked the man of the shop in which the cricket-balls, stumps, &c., were sold, "whether they got up at two o'clock in the morning to enjoy the game?" and he answered very seriously, "that he *did* think early in the morning was the best time." I should think so too !

Like the Americans, or most mean, pompous people, who do dirty things, and are then furious that they get the name they deserve, the "Bimms" complain of the misrepresentations that have been made about

them. As far as my experience goes, and from all that I can learn from conversations with various persons living in the place, and who know them well, the "Bimms" have much more reason to be afraid of the truth than of falsehood. Few people tell lies without an adequate object. Mrs. Trollope told of the Yankees that which was not only religiously true, but the unexaggerated truth.* The Americans sought by every means to cover truths that were disagreeable to them, and impose a little longer on the world. They liked to practise the meanness, the knavery, the villainy, and the dirty tricks attributed to them, but they did not like to get the character for doing all this; and it is much the same with the Barbadians.

The negro parts of Bridgetown are mere lanes; the wooden huts are often so close to the highway as only to admit of a narrow foot-path between them. Each hut has its few yards of ground, in which you will generally find tethered a lanky brown sheep, or a savage-looking black pig revelling in a cesspool, or a few guinea-fowls rooting about, and sometimes a turkey or two. These will generally be backed by a ragged plantain-tree, a cabbage-tree or two, or a couple of straggling cocoa-nut palms. The cactus flanks the door way, and a bush or two of the Spanish needles will be encouraged, as a convenience for drying clothes, whilst here and there a vagrant-looking aloe rears its mutilated leaves. Some few of the houses are painted

* Mrs. Kirkland, the cleverest public writer in America, has had the courage to speak in print of Mrs. Trollope's truisms.

and kept tolerably decent, but the majority are of the dark grey of nature untouched by art, whilst puddles, heaps of rubbish, and other abominations, proclaim the untidy habits of the occupants. A very common occupation amongst negroes is that of searching each others' heads. Each lane and house swarms with negro children, all but naked, whilst the transit of a stranger white man through these regions calls forth all the curiosity and speculation of the bronze-coloured inhabitants, in tones sufficiently audible, and not always flattering. For myself, I delighted to stroll through these primitive localities.

Barbadian sheep are curious animals—neither sheep, nor goats, nor deer, but a wretched compound of all three, and exceedingly “lean kine.” In colour they are a mixture of black and brown, the fleece looking, at a little distance, very like a ragged door-mat thrown over a black goat. The meat is very poor, lean, and flavourless, although the “Bimms” believe it to be unsurpassed. “We pride ourselves upon our mutton, Sir,” is a common phrase.

Milk, as I have already observed, is a scarce commodity in Bridgetown, and is adulterated even more than London “sky-blue.” The reason is that every one who has land can turn it to better account than pasturage, so that all the cows belong to negroes, who, as individuals, seldom own more than one or two, which feed much like a gipsy's donkey, on what they can pick up by the road-side. In warm European climates it is found more advantageous to use goat's

milk, as the pasturage for one cow would feed half a dozen goats. There is a little butter made in Barbadoes, but it is miserable stuff compared with European, or even American butter. Cows and horses here are principally fed on corn meat; the flags of Indian corn—the flags of the sugar cane being likewise used for the same purpose.

Elephantiasis is very common amongst the negro women: and truly elephantine do the legs become.



It is the *sequelæ* of fever and ague, here called colony fever, to distinguish it from yellow fever. The skin of the negro is very coarse, compared with that of the white, and he seems to have many loathsome cutaneous diseases, peculiar to dark races.

After two months residence in the West Indies, I felt some surprise that there had not been a thunder-storm in that time, notwithstanding the sultriness of the weather; yet rain-squalls abounded; and those who

associate a dry, clear, unclouded atmosphere with the Antilles would be very much mistaken. It is extremely damp, so much so as to make England seem a dry climate. Cutlery rusts, and clothes and boots mildew in a week; book-covers are spoiled in an incredibly short time, and almost every article deteriorates from excessive humidity. The masses of clouds which float in this atmosphere are immense, the largest I ever saw. Indeed, as we approached the island it was at only ten miles distance barely discernible through the haze, although on shore the sun was shining brightly. It is the damp more than the heat that makes the West Indies unhealthy, as by the combination of solar heat and humidity acting on the luxuriant vegetation, miasma is generated, whilst the inhabitants act entirely on a mistaken principle; the mode of living in the West Indies being very improper, and consequently very unwholesome.

Comparatively speaking Barbadoes has but few mosquitoes. For the first week or two they bit me, and were still more annoying from their trumpeting; but they only attack one at night, and as a preservative I used to rub lime-juice over the forehead and hands previous to going to bed, which proved quite effectual. They are very large, and if the hands be exposed principally attack the wrists. Mosquito nets are not used in Barbadoes, but a very disagreeable manner of arranging the bed is common, at least to houses of public entertainment. The straw mattress is generally

very hard, and on this is spread a single sheet, but no second one above, so that you do not sleep between sheets, but with only a single chintz quilt as a covering. The smell of the dye of this is unpleasant enough ; but if you perspire at night, as most people do here, the colours of the pattern will come off, and you rise with your hands and face stained with various tints, which are not so easy to remove as to acquire.

The everyday costume of all the whites is a white round jacket and white trowsers, varied by would-be exquisites with a black cloth waistcoat, and curious enough it is to a stranger to see a whole population dressed in white. The dress coat is invariably black, and that for a reason somewhat startling to a new-comer—its great convenience for attending funerals, as when a person dies two hundred invitations to assist at the burial will be printed. A sensitive survivor would be rather apt to regard this as a mockery of woe; but as a very large proportion of the whites are Irish, and that of an inferior order, many low Irish customs prevail. The Scotch who come out here, though of a somewhat better class, being engineers, and merchants' clerks, are rugged and opinionative ; and altogether society is at a very low ebb.

One of the drollest things that can be witnessed in the West Indies is the capers of the "liberty boys," on shore from the different ships of war. Half a dozen tars may be seen reeling across the street in a row, linked arm and arm, Jack glorious and pugnacious,

loving his shipmate as a brother one moment, and fighting with him the next. The scenes which occur on these occasions are ludicrous in the extreme.

Rebecca Philips, Hannah Massiah, Hannah H. Lewis, mulattoes, who keep boarding-houses and hotels, all live close together in Cumberland Street, Bridgetown, and all demand forty dollars a month, but take less. They keep pretty good tables, and have good rooms. These houses are frequented by merchants and colonial gentlemen.

Caroline Lee, a mulatto, proprietress of the "Free-mason's Hall," Broad Street, charges forty dollars a month, but is very exorbitant in extras. There is a billiard-room here, which attracts all the officers, and the steam-boat passengers. The house is kept in a very orderly manner, though the landlady has an equivocal reputation.

Mrs. Roach, a white, immediately opposite to Lee's, charges a dollar a day for transient visitors, and twenty-four a month for permanent visitors. She always asks more, and no dependence is to be placed on what she says. The boarders are usually shopmen (here called clerks in stores), tradesmen, and generally of the most inferior classes. The females are not very reputable, and the low Irish visitors, the *habitués* of the house, are very offensive in their habits and conduct. Altogether it is a very unfit place for any gentleman.

The "Sand House," kept by Incedon, a white, formerly a ship captain, is in Bay Street, close to the sea, and overlooks the bay. For his largest room he charges twenty-seven dollars a month. The visitors are second rate.

Miss McAlpine, a mulatto, resides in Trafalgar Street. She asks twenty-six dollars a month. The rooms are bad, and the visitors are second class.

Mrs. Fort, whose boarding-house is in Trafalgar Street, near the Cathedral, is a very respectable person.

At the Ice House, kept by one Cotton, an American, board may be had at twenty dollars a month, but not lodging. There is great choice at table, and this mode of living is perhaps the most desirable for a gentleman, as he will be exempt from the nuisance of mixing with the vulgar, ill-bred people, usually to be found in Barbadoes boarding-houses.

The passage from Barbadoes to America in an American ship is thirty dollars. The passage ditto to Trinidad, eight to fifteen dollars. To St. Vincent, six to seven dollars, finding yourself; eight dollars if found by the ship. The passage is made in one night. St. Vincent to Barbadoes eight dollars, finding yourself, often for three and four days. By steam to St. Vincent the fare is fifteen dollars. From St. Vincent to Barbadoes, twenty-five dollars.

The passage from Barbadoes to England in a first-class ship, including wine, spirits and beer, is

twenty-five to thirty pounds; second class, including wine, &c., twenty pounds. From Barbadoes to Jamaica, by ship, thirty-five dollars, which is very high.

Codrington College is fourteen miles from Bridgetown; the Animal Flower Cave and Hacketon's Cliff twelve miles.

CHAPTER V.

DEPARTURE FROM BARBADOES—COAST OF ST. VINCENT—KINGSTON BAY—CUTTING THE BUSH—ST. VINCENT NEGROES—TROPICAL FLORA—PORTUGUESE IMMIGRANTS—THE CARIB'S REVENGE—JUMBEЕ DANCE—BOTANICAL GARDEN—GEORGETOWN—RABACA.

I LEFT Barbadoes on the 15th of January for Trinidad in the colonial schooner 'Alarm,' of seventy-five tons, to touch at St. Vincent and Granada. The fare, without wine or spirits, was ten dollars, or two guineas. The round is about two hundred and sixty miles.

All the vessels which trade between the West India islands are extremely small craft, from ten up to seventy-five tons, sloops and schooners. Being generally crowded, they are very inconvenient for passengers. Occasionally a Yankee horse-laden brig of two hundred tons will touch at the islands, and take a passenger or two, but there is no certainty in their movements. At stated periods the steamers go these rounds ; but the passage-money is so high, that

comparatively few people can avail themselves of so expensive a conveyance. Twenty-five dollars or five guineas, or fifteen dollars or three guineas, as the passage is to windward or to leeward, for only ninety miles—one night's voyage—is rather too much.

We got under weigh at one P.M., and as it was quite useless to near the land until the next morning, we kept under easy sail all day and all night. St. Vincent is from land to land between sixty and seventy miles dead to leeward of Barbadoes; and it is said that when the sun sets clearly, it can be distinctly seen from the Barbadian hills. As we receded from Barbadoes the sea became tremendous; and this heavy swell is the characteristic of the little voyage. I had never before been at sea in so small a craft, and as at every roll the end of our main boom dipped into the heaving surge, and we had two horses on board, as well as a fearful "top hamper," the cruise was uncomfortable enough. Our cabin was full of women, trunks and handboxes. So I, in common with the majority of the male passengers, slept on deck.

At daybreak we sighted the land, and as we did so, caught a magnificent king-fish, four feet long. This scaly oddity was curiously banded, and was so extremely violent that everybody scrambled out of his way with as much alacrity as if he had been a shark.

As is usual in this moist climate, when the morning broke, St. Vincent loomed mistily through the dense

atmosphere, its lofty mountains half buried in clouds. The haze clearing off as we approached, we ran along its magnificent coast, passing the little village of Calliaqua, in whose miniature bay two or three large West Indiamen were lying at anchor, waiting for cargoes ; and at ten P.M. on Saturday we brought up in Kingston Bay, ninety miles from Barbadoes. Here I was suddenly compelled to apply for surgical assistance, and so went on shore, and put myself into the able hands of Dr. Baillie. I was obliged to remain in Kingston whilst the schooner continued her voyage ; and thus ended prematurely my first attempt to get to Trinidad.

Kingston, the capital of St. Vincent, is a very small place indeed, cosily lining a beautiful little bay ; and though the town stands a mile in length, it is but three streets in depth. This is all the level ground in the place, as the spurs of the lofty mountains by which it is encircled, rise immediately from the Back Street. These bold volcanic crags are clothed in darkest green, and bristle with hoary trees up to their very summits. The loftiest, Mount St. Andrew, is upwards of two thousand feet in height, and forms a splendid centre to one of the boldest ranges in form that I ever saw. Indeed Nature has here played the artist to perfection ; and had she been but tastefully seconded by man, the combination would have realized one of the loveliest creations that a picturesque eye could conceive. There is nothing in Greece so fine, since

the various families of palms, and other tropical sylvia, which here form a character *sui generis*, are wanting in the Archipelago. Even the Maritime Stone Pine (*Pinus maritima*) of Italy, beautiful though it be, must give place to the ostrich-like plume of the cocoa-nut, the gru-gru, the arica, or that noblest of all, the cabbage-palm, whilst the broad plantain and the flaggy sugar-cane have a peculiar charm. Of this wild beauty a few intellectual spirits have availed themselves, to form seclusions such as Cicero might have envied.

Of the town itself I shall only say, that its capabilities are very great. It *might* have a "marina" that would rival that of Palermo; it might have a "piazza" worthy of Tuscany; it might have fountains, (coming down from a source two thousand feet high) that would equal those of St. Peter's; but it has *not* anything. Grocery, dry-good stores, fishing-boats, and offal, smell more of St. Giles's than of Arcadia. Still my recollections of Kingston, St. Vincent, will always be pleasant, for men are men there, and not "Bimms." In the hour of need I found them good Samaritans, and blessed my stars that I was not in the United States, or Barbadoes. I came on shore in great suffering; the only two inns were crammed, and could hold no more, when a gentleman, whom I had casually met at a boarding-house in Barbadoes, recognised me, and took me into his house, putting himself to great inconvenience on my

account. In a few days I became convalescent, but circumstances induced me to remain in the island for a while.

Kingston Bay is formed by two bold green headlands, a mile apart, which on either point jut out three-quarters of a mile into the sea, of course making the bay exactly that depth inland. The north-west side is crowned by Fort Charlotte, the garrison; the south—Cane-garden Point, to the height of three hundred feet, is covered with sugar-canes, so that from either end of the town the ascent is sufficiently abrupt, affording views of surpassing beauty. One of these heights on Mount Sion was a favourite walk of mine—a green lane effectually screened from the sun by dense tropical foliage, affording seclusion, and opportunity quietly to examine all that was interesting; or if interrupted at all, it was by the civil “How d’ye, Massa?” of a stray negro.

I walked over Sion Hill with Mr. H——. The ascent is hard work, the hill being not less than three to four hundred feet in height; but the view over the town, the bay, and the amphitheatre of mountains is lovely, and well repays the labour; whilst on the eastern side of the promontory lies the pretty little village of Calliaqua, with its long isolated rock, Fort Duvernet, a miniature Dunbarton; and the bold Island of Bequia immediately in front, nine miles across the strait. This view is scarcely to be exceeded in any part of the Levant.

St. Vincent is infinitely more tropical than Bar-

badoes. The palms are loftier, fuller, and more flowing in their foliage. There are to be seen in great perfection the several varieties of the palm-tree—the gru-gru, the arica-palm, and the dwarf sago, as well as the cocoa-nut and cabbage-palm. The gru-gru is a shorter tree, the stem is thicker, and banded with rows of spines often four inches long, whilst the filaments of the leaves are of a finer and more silky texture than those of the cocoa-nut. As yet but little use has been discovered for it, the nut which it bears being here only eaten by children. It is, however, an extremely ornamental tree. The mango is a splendid tree, and the silk cotton-tree (*Bombax heptaphyllum*) a fine member of the forest, but useless as yet. The bread-fruit, the veritable bread-fruit (*Artocarpus incisa*), introduced by Bligh from Otaheite, in 1793, flourishes here, and its fruit grows as large as a thirty-six pounder. It is quite green outside, and when boiled for table, is very white and firm. In compliance with the law which applies to all that is intended to be a staple of life, it has no particular flavour. A fully ripe bread-fruit is worth a stampee, *i.e.*, a penny, and sometimes only a halfpenny.

We came upon the Rev. Mr. Strutt's negro servant, cutlass in hand, chopping the bushes right and left in very wantonness, whilst a little black imp was perched up at the top of a cocoa-nut palm pitching down the green young nuts. Of these our sable friend, after chopping off the soft end with his matchet, politely handed us the contents to drink, and a most

delicious draught it was. These bright apple-green cocoa-nuts, quite soft in rind, contain about half a pint of water, slightly lacteal in colour, and also an uncertain quantity of soft white gelatine. This is the nut in its incipient stage, before the white "meat" found in the cocoa-nut, known in England, becomes indurated. Cocoa-nut water when fresh is before all the sherbet which Mahomet promised to the faithful. In the Kingston market a green cocoa-nut is worth a halfpenny.

A negro never goes into the bush, or indeed takes the shortest walk when out of town, without his cutlass, which, though innocent enough in its appropriation, is a rough formidable weapon, having a broad blade set in a wooden handle, and a stamp of V. R. with the crown upon it. It costs a shilling or eighteenpence. With this he chops away twigs and tendrils, and on a country excursion it is really a most serviceable implement; for in breaking your way through the bush, pertinacious suckers cross your breast, and without considerable trouble, or such a weapon as this, it would be impossible to get along. How far it may be politic in case of disturbance, to permit a peasantry to be armed as the negroes are, is another matter.

The negro huts of St. Vincent are quite African in construction and arrangement, being low and heavily thatched, and clustered together in groves of mango and plantain trees, cocoa-nut, and bread-fruit, looking at a little distance very like bee-hives in a bed of

cabbage-sprouts. To people of decent habits St. Vincent is as healthy as England; but from carelessness and voluntary exposure there is amongst the blacks a good deal of fever and ague, and also leprosy.

My friend, Mr. J. H——, knew everybody, black and white; and had a word for one negress, a slap on the back for another, and a switch on the shoulder for a third; and to a stranger nothing could be more striking than the difference of manners between the negroes of St. Vincent and those of Barbadoes. In St. Vincent, out of town, most are civil, and though droll enough, perfectly respectful. The women never pass you without a “How dee, Massa?” and the men touch their hats; but in Barbadoes all is impudence and disrespect. Here a slap on the shoulder elicited from the sable lady a grin, and an arch “You moost be mad.”

There is no distress amongst the negroes here, and they dress neatly. The older women wear a man’s black hat, or a straw hat of the same form, over the kerchief, invariably bound round their woolly hair just above the eyes. As we passed them the bow and curtsy were universal. When away from the evil influences of the wolves in sheeps’ clothing, *mis*-called saints, the negroes are a lighthearted, merry, unreflecting race, with furious animal passions and excitable and impulsive dispositions, having of course all the drawbacks incident to such a character. As far as stealing goes, the negroes of St. Vincent are a much more honest race than the

Barbadians. There are only *a few* thieves amongst them; but those of the town will impose most unconscionably upon strangers. There are not any shore-boats in St. Vincent, as so few strangers come, that it would not be worth any one's while to keep a boat for the purpose; therefore I came on shore in the boat of the harbour-master, for which act of courtesy on his part I felt greatly indebted. His crew also fetched my traps on shore (a hundred yards), for which service they modestly demanded a dollar and a quarter (five shillings), but for which they received from my friend, an old resident, one shilling and sixpence and went away perfectly contented, whilst for bringing my luggage from the boat to the house, a *very* short distance indeed, the porter demanded a dollar, but got—sixpence! As an old traveller, I always left a resident to negotiate these things, and I recommend others to do the same.

Still the St. Vincent negroes are a more upright class than those of Barbadoes. They do not plunder or pilfer in the public places as the latter do; and stores are very rarely broken open. True, they make a great deal of money, more in comparison than the whites, as they sell many things at exorbitant prices. Milk is a hundred per cent. dearer than in London, as are also fuel and vegetables, with an infinity of other necessaries. Eggs of the most thoroughly bantam size and not always fresh, are (when cheap) a penny each.

At the best, St. Vincent is considered to be one of

the dearest places in the West Indies. Fish is sixpence a pound, and mutton (literally skin and bone) a shilling and a halfpenny per pound, though beef is only eightpence. Potatoes are fourpence a pound, and bacon from a shilling to one shilling and fourpence. I paid a stationer forty cents, or one shilling and sevenpence a quire for writing-paper, such as in England would be bought for sixpence. In consequence of the dearness of almost all articles of food, the generality of tables are supplied with indispensable viands only. Pastry is rarely placed on them, and I never saw anything in the shape of dessert.

I visited some sugar-works at Cane Garden; the process is very well to see once, but has been too often described to be worth dilating on here. The canes are crushed in a mill between four iron cylinders, and the juice conveyed by a trough to the boiling-house, where it is heated, boiled, and evaporated until it crystallizes. The new process of crystallizing the sugar in a vacuum pan is about to be introduced here. It is much quicker and more perfect than the old way, and in Demerara has been brought into full operation. On coming out of the boiling-house, the old head negro chalked a cross on a board, over which I had to step. This was to obtain a shilling as a perquisite, and the exacting of this toll is a source of great merriment to the blacks. The whole bevy, men and women, seemed to be in high glee, cracking their jokes at the expense of Mr. H——, and up to all sorts of fun.

I spent a day at Mr. J. H.'s cottage, a mile from

the town. The house, perched on the side of a ravine, commands delightful views of the sea and mountains; but the weather was by no means propitious, and violent gusts of wind and pelting rains annoyed us every ten minutes. In fact, during the first months of my residence in these islands, the climate seemed to be turned topsy-turvy.

In Mr. H.'s garden I found cinnamon and nutmeg-trees, as also the bread-nut, which differs altogether from the bread-fruit, bearing a sort of chestnut, good enough when boiled. Several very fine pine-apples were growing in the open air, but were not yet ripe. The road to the house led through an avenue of magnificent cabbage-palms, decidedly the finest trees in these latitudes. Here, for the first time, I saw a humming-bird flit from bush to bush; I had heard of them only in the United States. To me this little creature seemed quite black, and several that I have since seen have in the distance always appeared to be of the same sombre hue. Small green lizards abounded, as did also those very unpleasant neighbours the Jack-Spaniards, a large red wasp, which stings with great virulence. These bold buccaneers fix their nests inside the roof of every shed and verandah in St. Vincent, attaching themselves to the shingle nails, and would be fearful nuisances were it not for one circumstance, which is, that they never attack those who leave them unmolested. You may approach them very closely, and examine their nests with impunity, provided you do not touch them. The nest, which is pendant from

some angle or rafter, is a cluster of perhaps a hundred hexagonal cells of a very light texture. For some reason they are often deserted, and abandoned nests are continually to be met with. Jack-Spaniards are often found in the woods and bushes, and form one of the drawbacks of an exploring excursion. A single Jack-Spaniard invading the sanctity of one's domestic hearth, by flying in through the window, will set a whole family in commotion.

Centipedes are another plague. About a fortnight previous to my visit a friend was stung by one in this very house, and his hand was still swollen and discoloured. A few months before, in Kingston, a young man, of a very bad scrofulous habit of body, died from the bite of a centipede, the wound having mortified.

A curious plant, the shell-flower, was shown me. How I wished Bartholomew (that Professor of Painting to the Court of Flora) could have seen it. Alas! it was too fragile to admit of a voyage across the Atlantic, yet it is perhaps more curious than beautiful. The shells are of a delicate pink tinge.

The West Indies is the country for drinks, and for the most extravagant intemperance. Imagine a draught of delectable compound, composed of brandy, rum, wine, and porter, with lime-peel and nutmeg. This compound is appropriately designated rattle-skull. In fact, there is a free and easy style of living here worthy of Ireland in its palmiest days. Another potation, called cocoa-nut julip, cannot be passed over, being

worthy of Ganymede. It is the water of young green cocoa-nuts poured into a glass goblet, holding at least half a gallon, and to this is added the gelatine which the said nuts contain, sweetened, *secundem artem*, with refined sugar and Hollands gin. Without hyperbole this is a delicious drink.

The St. Vincent flora would furnish a medicine chest, though as yet little beyond sugar-cane is turned to account. The aloe, ipecacuanha, arnotto, gamboge, dragons-blood, logwood, and arrow-root all flourish here. I visited an arrow-root plantation, which, whilst the process of manufacture is an exceedingly troublesome one, does not pay. The root, which averages eight inches in length, is of a very white waxen hue, and is first ground by a wheel, moved with a treadle by the foot, like that of a knife-grinder. The pulp from this is washed in several waters, and strained through fine muslin; then left to settle and the water drawn off. The residuum is dried and broken into lumps, very white, and as tasteless as starch. It is then packed in tins containing sixteen pounds, and sent to England. The profits formerly derived from the preparation of arrow-root, have been quite neutralized by a spurious article of potato farina, which is sold in England as genuine, under the West Indian name.

According to some accounts, not more than two-thirds of St. Vincent are under cultivation, or about fifty-six thousand acres out of eighty-four thousand. Crown lands, of not less than forty acre lots, may still

be bought, in sequestered situations, as low as five dollars, or a guinea an acre, and an excellent investment might be made. The country is well watered, and as healthy as England. There are but few venomous reptiles, no monkeys, nor any dangerous snakes. The island is subject to earthquakes now and then, but they do but little harm.

It being for several reasons desirable that a peasant population superior to that of the negro should be introduced into the West Indies, immigrants from Madeira have been obtained, since negroes, however useful as mere slaves, are not at all to be advocated as a free labouring population. To supply this deficiency, the Madeirian immigrant is a most desirable importation; almost acclimated, he suffers next to nothing from the heat, whilst he is a quiet, steady, and much more amiable being than the negro. There are already in St. Vincent about eight hundred Madeirian immigrants, and all, save the blacks, are pleased with them. They have their passage paid for them, and as a return, are only required to serve for the first twelvemonth certain, when they receive a lot of ground for cultivation, and two bits, or eightpence cash a day for the whole time, with provisions served out to them, without cost, for the first six months, or until the ground allotted to them is capable of producing. After the expiration of this period, they daily receive the same sum for their labour, but the provisions are withdrawn, the ground allotted them supplying the greater part of their wants. The work

they do is more neatly done than that of the negro ; but as yet they do not do quite so much. Their superior steadiness, however, and higher caste in the scale of humanity, is considered a compensation. Generally speaking, the "Portugee" is well satisfied with the change. They are extremely civil, and in appearance exceedingly like the Irish peasant, particularly the women. The cropped poll, and *nez retroussé* of the men is Paddy all over. Some of the men wear at the back of the head an odd-looking worsted cap, very Chinese in form, having a tail sticking up behind something like that of a pantaloon. For myself, I confess I love to gaze on their good-natured faces.

There is a Catholic church with two priests, in Kingston, so that there is no danger of the Portuguese falling off from their orthodoxy, and the Protestant clergy here have too much good sense to attempt to interfere with their belief. The negroes are by no means pleased with the white immigrants, and it is rather a droll scene to witness the poor bewildered Portuguese on their first landing from the ship, clustering round the police office to be registered, surrounded by negroes male and female, making their comments on the new arrivals. The white peasantry, with their short sturdy figures, dark grey trowsers striped with black, russet shoes, coats slung over their shoulders, and straw hats or peaked worsted caps, regard these chocolate inquisitors with no friendly

looks, the negro being exceedingly critical in his way, and having a most amazing idea of his own superiority over "de Portugee," whom he affects to commiserate. The immigrants on their part are not quite pleased to be considered "Portuguese," and say "We are not Portuguese but from Madeira."

Besides these new-comers there are about three hundred Carib Indians in St. Vincent. These are the aboriginal inhabitants, and are in all respects much superior to the African negro. In colour they are mulatto or of a dark lemon tinge, and have straight hair. They are very civil and peaceable, but have a good deal of the stoicism of the Indian character. They live altogether towards the Souffrière. Of one whom I saw in the streets of Kingston, the following pleasing trait was told me by an eye-witness of the scene: For the purpose of going off to a drogher, the Indian was in a boat with three negroes, only a few yards from the little wharf at Rabacca, when the blacks drove him out of the boat with contumely, abusing him as an Indian dog. All the Caribs swim like fishes, and the poor despised Indian readily swam on shore swelling with indignation. He drew himself majestically up, and stood with folded arms, breathing scorn and vengeance. The weather had been boisterous, with a heavy sea, and a sudden squall upset the boat, tumbling his three persecutors (none of whom could swim) into the "Hell of waters." Several whites beheld the accident from the wharf, but not one

volunteered to go to the rescue, and the miserable wretches were drowning ; when the poor insulted Carib, who had stood with folded arms quietly looking on, suddenly dashed into the sea, and swimming to the spot, brought each negro singly to the wharf. One drowning wretch, in his agony, clung to his would-be preserver, to the manifest peril of both ; but the Indian, with the agility of a dolphin, freed himself from the fatal grasp, and striking the negro on the temple, stunned him, and then seizing him by the back of the neck, towed him on shore, head foremost. Such was the Carib's revenge !

My informant, a white gentleman, who was also a capital swimmer, assured me that he would not have ventured into such a sea to save any man.

There are a great many Scotch in St. Vincent, and Scotch, too, of an inferior class, by no means favourable specimens of their country. Their proximity shows itself in the nomenclature of the various localities, as Edinburgh, a little glen and bay, shut out from Kingston, and quite secluded by a tiny promontory ; Montrose, Ross Castle, and Castle Grant, *cum multis aliis*.

Most of the Scotch come to the West Indies as indentured servants, and their countrymen being proverbially clannish, they get preferment as soon as qualified. I never heard of but one Scotch gentleman being in St. Vincent.

Many of these men begin life as ploughmen and assistant overseers. One I knew, who is the owner of

two or three fine properties, and acting manager of the best estates of the Kingston valley. This canny Scot lived a long time upon bread-fruit, and jack-fish, and cultivated with his own hands the land allotted him, selling the produce, until he had scraped together sufficient money to purchase property of his own. Some idea of how this was done may be formed from the fact that when he was in the receipt of only one hundred pounds a year, he transmitted home, as his annual saving, one hundred and fifty pounds, and grumbled at the "bad times!"

There is a garrison here, Fort Charlotte, splendidly situated. It crowns the apex of a low mountain, forming the west side of Kingston Bay, and the view from it is surpassingly fine. The bold volcanic peaks, green with verdure, and shaggy with hoary forests; the deep valley, smiling with cultivation; the Italian-looking town, and the deep blue sea, which from this height seems as if it would reveal all its secrets, make up an enchanting prospect, while in front lies the bold land of Bequia, with its swingeing tide-way and dangerous channel.

Soon after my arrival at St. Vincent, I went with a maroon, or West India gipseying party, to a chalybeate spa, about four miles from Kingston. We repaired first to Mount Agiouti, a place of Mr. J. W. A——ll's. The house is perched on an extremely steep hill, and, in fact, the character of everything here is thoroughly Highland, brawling torrents, full

of boulders of trap-rock, and without bridges. The last part of our journey lay along narrow paths, through cane-fields, the canes then being at their full height, of seven to eight feet. These staunch, sturdy canes, thick as one's wrist, were strewn across the path in glorious intricacies, through which man and beast had to break their way, a most unpleasant thing on horseback, as one cannot see a yard ahead, and every other cane seemed perversely to have bent itself across the path, just raking the breast of the horse; and if he manage to get through, it may, in its reaction, take his rider a sharp blow across the face, or even drag him entirely over the crupper. This was the most dangerous and unpleasant equestrian journey that I ever performed. If the canes are wet from rain, the pendant flags will drench one through in five minutes. To win one's way, on foot, up the steep and rugged ascent to Mount Agiouti in cane time, is of itself no small achievement. I observed the fierce wind whirl through the shell of a house, perched up twelve feet high on slender posts, shaking it to a degree that literally threatened its being blown over, the fate which its owner anticipates for it. And what a jolly owner he was! full of frolic and fun, and teeming with the milk of human kindness! After a time we went on to the Spring, Mr. A—— having some joke for every negro, man, woman or child, that we met. I thought of Connecticut, and the cold, selfish Yankees—slimy, serpent-like knaves. Here every one was

"fair, and above-board," or, if anything, better than he seemed. Never before was a contrast of human beings more striking.

We spent a most pleasant day. Coming home, Patrick, a negro boy of twelve years of age, was sent to show me a near way through the cane-brake; and away we cracked and crashed in grand style, through the really tangled brake. We passed in safety, *i.e.* without a ducking, the shallow streams on stepping-stones, when I gave Patrick his honorarium. He hesitated, as I dismissed him. "You can go back, Patrick," I said, "I can do very well now. It is not necessary to go any farther." Still the boy hesitated. "I not leabe you, Sar." "Yes, yes, you may tell Mr. A—— that *I* told you to go back." "I not leabe you, Sar; I 'fraid." "Of what are you afraid? Say that I told you to go back." "I 'feared of de Jumbee in de cane, Sar." (The African devil, or evil spirit.) The poor boy, in short, was afraid to go home, not from apprehension of "de Massa," who was kindness personified, but of de Jumbee. Of course I was delighted to question him. "De Jumbee seen in de cane, Sar, last Wednesday. Him seen, Sar." "Ah, ah! so lately, eh!" "Yes, Sar, last Wednesday." And the poor boy gladly trudged the whole way to town, to return early the next morning, rather than encounter the dreaded Jumbee! The explanation of this is, that it suits the purpose of the negro cane-stealers to show themselves at dusk as "de Jumbee,"

and thus to create an insurmountable terror among the coloured denizens.

One evening in Kingston I witnessed a "Willy," or Jumbee dance, got up as an exhibition by an African Ebo negro. "De Jumbee" was of course an imitation of the genuine. The spectators were chiefly negroes, as the majority of the whites, being hucksters, are interested in nothing beyond peddling. "De Jumpsaman" was assisted by some of the Ebo soldiers of the negro regiment stationed here; two tum-tums, beating the *dum callaloo*, and five or six negro wenches from the Granadines singing an African chorus, and clapping their hands as an accompaniment. The Jumpsaman was brought out of a negro hut on the shoulders of the soldiers, and being upon stilts six feet high, fastened to his feet, was unable to assist himself, and was therefore placed upright against the wall. He was dressed in a guernsey-frock, and long striped trowsers, made very wide, which concealed his feet. His face was covered with a mask of scarlet cloth, ornamented with cowrie shells; and having a huge wig and beard, with a grenadier's hairy cap on his head, he looked unearthly enough. The dance consisted of various contortions of the body sufficiently droll; for as the stilts had no supports of any sort, it was impossible for him to control his movements beyond preserving a perfect balance, which he maintained with great precision.

After having alternately amused and frightened the

women for twenty minutes the Jumpsman was carried back to his hut : and then came the grand feat of the evening, which was to test his supernatural powers. A stout stick, about six feet long, held by four of the strongest men in the company, was, at a word from the Jumpsman, to fly out of their hands in spite of all their efforts. The stick was, with a great affectation of absence of all concealment paraded about amongst the spectators, with the offer that any one in company might hold it. This two or three mulattoes volunteered to do, but somehow or other evasions were made, and the *bâton* was finally intrusted to four stout confederates. The wizard, stripped of his mask, talked to the stick ; the drums made a horrible noise ; the singing ladies squalled to the top of their bent ; and the uproar became terrific. Still the stick did not budge, and the magician looked nonplussed, and it was thought to be a dead failure, when suddenly the din recommenced, the staff showed symptoms of yielding, and the men began to heave with their exertions to hold it. The struggle soon grew furious, the enchanted shillelah dragging the sable Sampsons all round the yard ; and at length, in spite of their efforts, it flew out of their hands, and the powers of the magician were established. The sable spectators began to scratch their heads and look profound, convinced that there was evidently more in the thing than met the eye. And so there was ; the stout men were the confederates of " de Jumpsman," and the pretended struggle to hold the stick was

merely a capital piece of acting. I subsequently found that the Jumbee-man was a regular Obea doctor, *i. e.*, one who gives and counteracts poisons after the most approved African mode—often practised here by the natives amongst themselves. He had *three* wives, who travelled with him, and with one I had some conversation.

Horse hire is very high in St. Vincent. Three dollars, twelve shillings and sixpence, are demanded for a regular Dobbin for a day! It must be owned, however, that horse-keep is expensive. They feed on guinea-grass, brought into the town every evening by negroes; and a horse cannot be kept for less than seventeen dollars a month (three pounds ten shillings sterling.) The roads also are so bad that one day's journey will knock a horse up.

The weather was hot, and it was desirable to keep out of the sun, especially to guard the head from a *coup de soleil*. Many carried an umbrella for this purpose. The evenings, on the other hand, were invariably cool, sometimes even cold, so that towards morning a blanket or counterpane was an agreeable addition to one's comfort. Fever and ague was constantly flying about, carrying off victims with very little warning. H—— thought once of speculating in a cargo of ready-made coffins from Connecticut.

The driest months in St. Vincent are March and April. May and June are blowing months, and from July to October are the hurricane months. There is

something odd to a European in seeing the clouds always setting one way, or only varying imperceptibly from north-east to south-east. Such enormous masses of vapour too ! nothing like them to be seen in England.

Generally speaking, carpenter's work is very clumsily done in St. Vincent. The negro workmen cobble things so ; and if not carefully watched and directed are sure to make a botch of it, putting on a lock upside down, or doing what is to be done in the most inconvenient manner. Locks to doors are usually very bad, or wanting altogether. In fact, all things are too much in common, and privacy or seclusion seems almost impossible.

I bought a sour-sop in the market for a penny, fully ripe and weighing four pounds, and a very large pine-apple, of most delicious flavour, for ten dogs—sixpence. Turtle-soup is not so common here as I had supposed. Turtle is cheap enough, being little more than one-third the price of mutton, or from fourpence to fivepence a pound, taking the fish as it is ; but it is the condiments, the accessories, that even here make it expensive. A Scotch captain, who commanded a large West Indiaman lying in Calliaqua Bay, invited several respectable inhabitants of the town on board his ship to take some real turtle-soup. They went of course, expecting something superlatively good, when to their dismay a huge turtle, merely cut into bits and stewed in water only, with all its offal and without any auxiliaries whatever, was produced. For West Indians to

eat such abominable stuff was impossible, and in spite of the reiterated commendations of the "Caw'pen" that it was ra-al turtle, the genuine thing, they revolted at the Barmecidean treat.

Of itself, turtle is merely a gelatinous—easily digestible food, of no particular flavour, and bating that you may eat more of it with impunity than of any other animal food, the condiments are all in all. In the United States, as in England, half that one gets is merely *beef-soup*, with a few bits of turtle in it to save appearances.

The botanical garden, a mile from Kingston, is now a splendid waste—a paradise dismantled. It covers several acres, and contains a rare and valuable collection of such exotics as might be serviceably cultivated in these islands: the nutmeg, clove-tree, cinnamon and guava, with others too numerous to mention; but to a European all of them interesting. Of these trees the nutmeg is perhaps the most curious. It is a large bushy tree, of colour and size, and the fruit looks exactly like an unripe apricot. When ripe the fruit splits open, displaying the black nutmeg encased in its pericardium of bright crimson mace, and looking for all the world like a waxen anatomical preparation. As the thick case shrinks, the kernel or nutmeg drops out, and is gathered daily under the tree; unfortunately in a day or less the colours fade, the crimson vanishes, and the mace assumes the light fawn-like hue that we see in the shops. The leaf, in form and texture, is like a laurel. This now West

Indian spice is considered to be superior to that of the East, where it originated. I tasted a ripe guava, and found the flavour resembled that of a strawberry which had lost its freshness.

The garden also contains the cocoa-tree, the coffee-bush, and the clove, which when fresh is of a bright crimson. The whole of this once lovely place is now overrun with brushwood, which as the trees are still *in situ* seems to be a great pity, as the ground is not likely to be turned to any better account. The spirit of retrenchment appears to have begun at the wrong end of everything. Government Cottage is situated at the extremity of this neglected spot.

Virtue is at a very low ebb amongst the negroes, and nobody seems to think anything of a negro girl having had a child. No lady would for a moment object to hiring a servant girl for such a reason. These children of course come with their mothers, so that in most houses three or four little black imps belonging to the various domestics are not at all an uncommon sight. On my asking a fine young negro wench, out of sheer badinage, where her child was, she instantly answered, "Him dead, Sar; him no lib." Mulatto women will talk to you of "mee husband John," and "mee husband James," and "mee *married* husband" (meaning the *real* husband). For a creole lady also to talk to you of "a coloured sister or coloured brother of mine," is a matter of course. These illegitimate female relations generally act as servants to the more fortunate brothers and sisters. Mulatto children

seem to be an unhealthy race, having enormous bellies apparently ready to burst, with thin ricketty shanks. The really white children are a thriving race.

All around me I heard the wretched efforts of the mulattoes to thrum on the pianoforte, or to squeak a few tunes on the flute; and there are few of the minor miseries of life equal to the necessity of listening to beginners trying to pick out a tune, when, as occurs in nine cases out of ten, there is no possibility of getting out of the way of the infliction. In Otaheite, or New Zealand, there is both romance and interest in watching the savage endeavouring to civilize himself; but there is none in being bored with the absurd efforts of these mongrels to emulate the European in his accomplishments. The airs of importance that many of the mulattoes give themselves, combined with the grossest ignorance of all that they wish Europeans to believe them acquainted with, are too ludicrous.

Negro nurses tease the children committed to their care very much—pinch them on the sly, make faces at them, snatch their playthings from them, and seem to delight in annoying them. When they think themselves unobserved, negro grooms tease and ill-treat horses, so that the poor animals recoil from the blacks, and seem uneasy when they are near. In truth the negro character is not an amiable one.

It is a curious custom of the whites to speak broken English to the negroes, by way I suppose of making themselves better understood; and to us it also sounds odd enough to hear white married ladies, the mothers of large families, called by their negro attendants,

"Miss Jane," or "Miss Kate." The first time that I heard this, not being aware of the usage, I felt very doubtful as to the legality of the domestic connection, nor was it until I became perfectly reassured on this point that I got reconciled to so anomalous a custom.

The weather continued bad through the whole of January and February. The wind blew in sudden gusts or furious blasts throughout the night and day, with violent showers at intervals. No fish could be had for dinner, as it was blowing too hard for the boats to venture out. Between the squalls it was excessively hot. Nor was this inclement weather unattended with accidents. People were knocked overboard and drowned by the breaking of boom-guys, and boats upset and crews lost by the half dozen. Scarcely a week passed without some nautical casualty—the result of encountering a raging sea, in craft too small to be safe, or of thorough fool-hardiness.

I left Kingston on the 1st of March for George-town, at the foot of the Souffrière in the Carib country, twenty-one miles distant along the windward coast. In these islands the points of the compass are but little heeded, every direction is to "windward" or to "leeward."

The windward road as far as Georgetown is not particularly romantic, although the wild and ever chafing sea "lashes with idle rage the laughing strand." All along the coast the surf was tremendous, the breakers leaping up and chasing each other like maniacs, until with a bellow of rage they spent themselves in foam on the beach. We passed Calliaqua and several sugar estates, as the "Upper and Lower Dia-

mond," "North and South Union," &c. Much of the road lay along the sea-shore, occasionally mounting over high bluffs of tufa and conglomerate, with boulders of trap. Excepting seaward the views were rather limited, and the valleys by no means equal in picturesqueness to the valley of Kingston. Now and then indeed we caught sight of a peak, as the Petit Bonhomme, &c.; but after a ride of seventeen miles, I was glad enough to pull up at Wynne's store and get some refreshment, such as it was.

Out of Kingston there are no inns, and your only chance of getting anything to eat is either to ride up to the house of some planter, which a stranger can hardly do, or to stop as we did at a store kept by some coloured man, maintained in it, *sub rosa*, by the attorney or manager of an estate, for his own particular profit. This is one of the means by which these Scotch gentry make money. These stores, a sort of country shop, supply the negroes with salt-fish, porter in bottles, dry goods, *i. e.* articles of coarse clothing, cutlasses, or tawdry finery, and indeed all the things that negroes are likely to require. At this establishment we could only obtain some sour porter, a biscuit or two, and as a relish some raw salt-fish.

We got into Georgetown, a mere village with a church, by seven o'clock P.M. Coming along, the castor-oil bush (*Olio ricini*) with its pendant, prickly fruit, was pointed out to me. The negroes of St. Vincent prepare it very indifferently by merely boiling the oil from the wild shrub, no attention whatever being paid to its cultivation.

The next day I rode over to Rabacca, two miles. Going down hill, a weak pony that I rode fairly fell down, and in his efforts to rise, pitched me over his head, sprawling turtle-fashion in the sand. A scratched face, contused knee, and a gentle sprain of the wrist were all my hurts, and I soon mounted again. We crossed the "dry river," one of the lions of these parts, the river having been diverted from its channel at the eruption in 1812 of the Souffrière, from which it immediately descends. There was formerly a deep ravine here, but it is now literally filled up with volcanic scoria and ashes. The river is divided into two wide branches by a narrow strip of land covered with shrubs, a veritable delta, in the southern branch of which a stream of water, passed on stepping-stones, still percolates. In fact, the great body of water, instead of following its legitimate channel, sinks into the earth, and finds a subterranean passage to the sea, but in the rainy season this tunnel is filled up by the *débris* washed down from the mountain, and for the time being, the river rushes along its bed. The rains over, it sinks again to the tunnel.

Rabacca consists merely of sugar works and a single store. It has a wooden pier or wharf for shipping sugar, and few people sipping their sweetened tea in England have any idea of the tremendous risk there is in shipping it off on such a wild coast as this, on which the sea breaks with an appalling violence. The drogher, a schooner generally about forty-five tons, which conveys the sugar from the estates to the ship in which it is exported, lies at anchor a few hundred

ds from the shore, pitching "bows under," and not frequently breaking her jib-boom from the mere violence of her concussion with the sea. The boats called moses-boats, which convey the hogshead from



the shore to the drogher, are tremendously strong, head and stern being built alike, with a good "shear" like a whale boat. They are manned by negroes and Carib Indians, and the very launching of such a heavy boat through such a surf is a sight to be remembered.

They are warped off by a strong cable fastened to a buoy two hundred feet from the beach, and as each hogshead is sent down to the wharf by a tram on a tiny railroad, it is lowered by a strong crane into the boat hauled for the purpose beneath. Then comes "the tug of war:" all hands in the boat are on the alert hauling on the cable, whilst on the wharf a negro captain watches the seas as they rush past with resistless force, so that one could fancy the boat would positively stand on end. This swell, which sends the boat several yards from the pier, having passed, they haul in again often several times, until the hogshead, which all this time has been gradually lowering and hangs suspended, is over the boat, or rather the boat is fairly under it. At the word "lower away," it is lodged in the boat, the can-hooks are promptly unshipped; two stout oars and four paddles are instantly brought to bear; and away she goes rolling over the immense seas to the drogher. Three boats are employed in loading a single drogher, each with a crew of six swarthy fellows. Each hogshead averages nineteen hundred pounds in weight, and to come alongside a vessel with such a weight in so heavy a sea is extremely perilous, from the danger there is of being crushed against its sides. When the boats do upset, there are generally one or two drowned, as the sea breaks their backs, and the under-tow carries them bodily down. Indians never drown, and in the event of any article that they are bringing ashore getting overboard, it is beautiful to see them pop over after it,

their bright copper skins glancing in the sun as they float in the transparent azure sea. I saw a paper of several pounds of adamantine candles take the benefit of sea-bathing and also a bag containing sundries; the fellow who, naked to the waist, went over for them, seemed to float with as little exertion as a fish, and elicited from the captain on the pier the shrewd observation that he was a "Clebber boy, dat." The boats, strong as they are built, never last more than two seasons.

The droghers, with a crew of sixteen men, are sometimes lost; and often cannot communicate with the shore for weeks. One merchant had goods on board for six weeks, and my friend Mr. S—— was for four weeks, utterly unable to land them. For passengers to go on shore, a large bucket is lowered from the pier, into which they get from the boat and are then "guyed up," not always however without injury, and a ducking is by no means an unfrequent occurrence. The surf is fearful, and the seas as they rush under and break, shake the pier in an ominous manner, often carrying off a few timbers. A laden drogher generally reaches Kingston in four hours, but to come to windward is another matter. They leave Kingston in the evening, stretch out to sea, lay-to at a distance of ten or twelve miles, and then run in for the land at daybreak.

CHAPTER VI.

RIDE INTO THE INTERIOR—MOUNTAIN SCENERY—VISIT TO THE
“FANCY” ESTATE—WEST INDIAN KITCHENS—THE RAIN-BIRD—
IGNORANCE OF CREOLES—SCORPIONS—TROPICAL TREES—IN-
SECTS OF ST. VINCENT—STATE OF LITERATURE—DOMESTIC
ECONOMY—GEORGETOWN.

MR. S——, of Rabacca, took me to visit the
“Fancy,” the last estate at the extreme north end of
the island, beyond which there are no roads even for a
horse, but merely a few negro paths cut through the
bush. The distance is fifteen miles; and our way lay
through the Carib country, and the Carib settlement at
Sandy Bay.

After passing three estates we came into the wild
country, and wild in truth it was—the wildest that I
ever saw. A mere bridle-path led along the brink of
tremendous precipices, over a succession of enormously
lofty headlands, with the sea leaping and breaking with
a bellow of thunder immediately under us, though far,
far below, for the greater part. These frightful preci-

pices were partially concealed from us by a treacherous growth of under-brush, sea-side grape, with tendrilous and parasitical plants pendant from the loftier trees, as at intervals there shot up a gru-gru, or a gree-gree, another variety of the palm tribe. At any place, one false step of the horse would have led to the inevitable destruction of its rider. The shore below us was choked with enormous boulders of dark trap.

Our road consisted of a succession of sharp ascents, up which our animals would scramble at a rate far too fast to be agreeable to the nerves, particularly when the rider was ignorant what the top, when gained, would lead to. The turns round huge trap rocks towering above our heads were very sudden, and the rocky descents down which we plunged, frightfully steep, and for the greater part of our ride the road was seldom visible more than a dozen yards before us. Occasionally a succession of sharp rocky descents brought us to the sea-shore, which was covered with black volcanic sand, and we would coast along for a quarter of a mile, opening on our left wide valleys of gru-gru palms and wild plantains, and so bristling with bushes as to defy the power of man to penetrate to the interior. Many of the trees were choked in the embraces of a dark green parasite, a species of ivy, and the majority had a multiplicity of long tendrils pendant from them. The mountains of the Souffrière far above us, to which these valleys led, were covered with clouds.

It was weary as well as nervous work to get over such a road ; and to make it more disagreeable, my steed was

a skittish young mare, which had won several races. She was, it was true, sure-footed and careful, but from my being obliged to keep a very tight rein to prevent her pressing forward too fast, and the absolute necessity there was of scarcely taking one's eyes off the road, I could enjoy nothing like quiet contemplation. A sharp, quick glance around us now and then, was all that we could venture upon ; indeed, experienced travellers over the Andes have said, that even there they had never passed precipices of such great length, and in such absolute succession, as over the road we were now traversing. The rivers were merely mountain torrents, at present nearly dry, having only a gush of water rushing through the middle of their rocky channels, though in the rainy season they become roaring and dangerous sluices, carrying all before them. Occasionally we met a negro or a Carib family, the women naked to the waist, and of a fine clear brown. All spoke civilly enough, and the men touched their hats, but the young Carib ladies were rather reserved, and crossing their arms over their breasts, formed a very effectual barrier to the prying eyes of the white stranger. My companion was well known to them all. As a race, they are immeasurably superior to the negro, though they sometimes intermarry, producing a mongrel race, called "black Caribs."

In this way, sometimes descending to the sea-shore, and then mounting eight hundred or a thousand feet above it, we came to Sandy Bay, the Carib settlement. I rode up to some huts, and obtained a draught of

water. The adult population, male and female, were however chiefly away at their provision grounds. The younger children were quite naked; the older girls clothed from the waist downwards. The water had to be brought some little distance, and I gave the bearer a fourpenny-piece, here called a bit. This I was told by Mr. S—— would not be valued so much for its intrinsic worth, as it would be prized as a token of good-will and satisfaction on the part of the “buckra” donor. The grounds of these people, like those of the negro, so amply supply their wants, that money is little cared for. They have also plenty of agiouti, guanas, manitous (opossums), and wild boar, all for the trifling exertion of taking them; and being fishermen and boatmen, and sometimes also taking a spell of work at the wharf at Rabacca, they earn more money than they well know what to do with. They speak negro English, and dress like the rest of the coloured races.

A Yorkshireman named Brown, a superannuated cooper, who had a grant of land from an estate, which he has faithfully served, and has married a Carib woman, by whom he had three children, is the owner of a good thatched house in the settlement, and is comfortably domiciled amongst the Caribs.

From Sandy Bay we passed the Bloody Bridge, where in the Carib war against the English in 1796, a detachment of soldiers were cut off to a man by an ambuscade. We crossed the immense headland of Point Espagnole, and saw on the sea the terrible

rocks called the "Cow and Calves," and arrived at Commantawana Point, dividing the two points of Owia Bay. Here Mr. Dunlop, of Kingston, has a small estate and thatched bungalow. We descended to the sea-shore again, and had an awful bit of road to pass, of loose shingly rocks, the *débris* which had fallen from above. Along this our horses slipped and clattered, and glad enough I was even to mount once more another range of headlands; and at last, weary and half-frightened, to see far below us the sugar-works and dwelling-house of the "Fancy." The, in this case, *descensus* Elysium, was a zig-zag road leading through the cane fields, steep enough in case of accident, but as the tumble would not have been more than three or four hundred feet, it was comparatively level ground to that which we had passed. We arrived at the house by a quarter before two o'clock, having been nearly four hours covering fifteen miles. One of the least agreeable sensations of such a journey to a tired man is the extreme eagerness of the horses to press on down such fearful descents, the moment they suspect where their resting-place is likely to be.

A manager here (in this case a graduate of the Marischal College, Aberdeen,) has but a lonely life of it, having no communion with his kind, excepting in the case of a stray stranger or two like ourselves—and my companion visited the estate on business. Usually the manager has a sufficiently good house, and plenty of people to obey him, and generally forms some connection with a coloured girl, who is his wife, *pro tem*.

When strangers are present, the brown lady officiates merely as housekeeper.

In such cases, the table of a bachelor-manager is seldom very amply supplied. Unless an agiouti, a guana, or an opossum be shot, fresh meat is scarcely to be had. Fine fish, however, is plentiful, *when* the weather is calm enough for the boats to go out, and the boatmen of the estate are not engaged in making sugar. A fowl or a pig *may* be slaughtered on the arrival of strangers; but salt fish, and Irish salt beef, are the general *pièces de résistance*. Boiled yams, with a soup of pigeon-peas, or *callaloo*, a sort of spinach-soup, having in it "tannier" (a waxy species of potato, that sticks to one's teeth, and is therefore somewhat disagreeable to eat), forms the customary dinner. Soft bread must not be looked for, and large square captain's biscuit, an inch thick, baked in America, is the usual substitute. Madeira and bitters, as a provocative, and whiskey or brandy and water, or as a *dernier ressort*, rum, are the customary solvents. Eggs, albeit from the mode of cooking uneatable to an Englishman, are plentiful enough. The eggs are never boiled, but merely put into hot water, and thus brought to table. Egg-cups there are none.

We walked up Point Fancy, a tolerably steep hill, which juts into the sea, and forms one boundary of the estate, the other being Point Porter. I saw a whale immediately below, doing battle with a thrasher. Whales abound in these seas.

These two promontories, Point Porter and Point

Fancy, are spurs of Ben More, a peak of four thousand feet in height, which towers up over the back of the "Fancy" estate. The whole range is extremely beautiful, being clothed in impenetrable forest up to their topmost heights. Not one peak is bare. Amongst these trees, the gru-gru alone gives a tropical character to the forest. Wild boars, guanias, possums, and goutees (agiouti) abound. There are also snakes of three species—white, black, and congo, but they are said to be harmless.

From the whole of these lands, the island of St. Lucia, eighteen miles distant, can be distinctly seen when the day is clear. We saw the loom of it in the evening, and could even trace its sugar loaves (two conspicuous mountains) on the following morning.

The black overseer showed me a bunch of ten rats, for which he would get a tampee (a penny) a piece, the tails being cut off on the receipt of the money, so that they may not a second time be brought forward for the reward. So destructive are rats to the canes, that the manager assured me the premium of a penny for each rat was the most gainful expenditure on the estate. This day the negro overseer, by his rat-catching, doubled his pay, as he received for his ordinary labour tenpence *per diem*. The common labourers get only two bits, or eightpence. I found that the Portuguese employed here are highly prized, as they are more civil and steady than the negroes, who, on an estate, are comparatively saucy and capricious, and not at all to be depended upon amongst themselves. The

negroes are also a horribly drunken, quarrelsome race. The Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Campbell, gave great offence to the coloured population of St. Vincent, by sending home a report to that effect; and also that there was not a coloured man on the island fit to be intrusted with a public office, both of which statements are strictly true.

To the negro, as to the Carib, the facility of supporting himself is so great as almost to render him independent of the necessity of labouring for others. His grounds supply him with the staples of negro life, and sixpence a week to buy salt fish, a mere luxury, is all that he requires. This, one job will procure him. In such an island, in which not more than one-seventh part is cultivated, the negro will "squat," or at best hire an acre of land, at a yearly rental of a doubloon (sixteen dollars). The quantity rented is merely nominal, and means as much ground as he and his family can cultivate, so long as he does not interfere with the grounds of his neighbours, for the produce of which rented ground he finds a ready sale. Great use is made of the bread-fruit, which is both agreeable and nutritious, and in the "bush," an absolute guarantee against starvation. Indeed, as long as the negro has power to put his hand to his mouth, he cannot starve, as if one of his staples of life fail, twenty more are ready to supply its place. Fish in every stream are for the catching; agioutis for the trouble of shooting, or of making a reed trap; pigs and fowls are reared at the expense of their first cost, as they forage for them-

selves ; yams, plantains, mangoes, and bananas, even if freshly planted, bear in an incredibly short time. So no wonder that the negro is saucy to his master, though civil enough in a general way. "We," said Mr. Taylor, "are the obliged parties."

A negro, George, who carried on his head our wine, and a change of clothes, &c., from Rabacca to the "Fancy," once swallowed a centipede ! He was dreadfully stung in the mouth and throat, but not in the stomach, as the reptile probably died the instant it got into that burning receptacle. This man got up in the dark to drink some water, in which the centipede was bathing itself, and so the mishap occurred. These vermin will live for a long time in water, although sweet oil, or rum, will instantly kill them. A day or two ago, Mrs. S——, at Rabacca, felt something crawling over her neck, between the skin and her gown ; she hastily tore off her can-zoo, and behold ! there was a centipede, three inches long, in full march. It was taken off by her son with a pair of scizzors, almost miraculously without a bite. I myself, in a room full of children, saw one crawling over a cellarette, and had some difficulty in killing it, so extremely hard is the crustaceous shell. They do not sting, but bite. A boy in Kingston got dreadfully bitten by one, through inadvertently putting on his boots without examining them. It is dangerous to handle clothing, waste paper, or anything of the sort, without a scrutiny. On my removing a heap of a similar character, I killed something that rushed briskly out, and it proved to be a scorpion.

I heard from Mr. S—— a droll account of the effects of an over-dose of tea. Going on some expedition with the manager of an estate, they ordered a negro boy to make tea for them. It proved to be awfully strong ; but as they had nearly two gallons of milk by them, it was plentifully diluted with the lacteal fluid. They set off, but had not ridden far before Mr. S—— feeling extremely unwell, got off his horse, and vomited. The other also felt sundry uneasy sensations about the stomach ; and both believing themselves to be poisoned, returned to question the boy, as to *how* he had made the tea, and what he had put into it. “ I make de tea as common, Massa—de hot waater, an I put so mooch tea,” showing that he had put as much as his two hands joined together could contain, *i. e.* nearly a quarter of a pound. “ On lifting up the lid of the teapot, the leaves,” said Mr. S——, “ jumped up like a heap of spinach.”

In England, we hear much of the heat of the West Indies ; but as far as my experience went, I found the climate was not nearly so hot as that of Catania, Palermo, Naples, or even Milan in the summer, to say nothing of New York, Philadelphia, or Baltimore. Nay, hot weather in London, when it does come, is far more overpowering, since in these islands there is almost always a strong and refreshing sea-breeze. At Kingston, St. Vincent, the nights are invariably cool, sometimes even cold, which in North America, or in Sicily, is not the case. At the “ Fancy,” I was glad to cover myself well up in bed, and in the morning was all but shivering with cold. Indeed the whole time of our

sojourn there, as well as during our journey going and coming, the wind blew most furiously, obliging me, every time I ventured out of doors, to tie my straw hat firmly on.

About four miles from the "Fancy" are the falls of Le Petit Ballein, said to be well worth a visit; but as the best boatmen of the estate were busy sugar-making, the sea extremely heavy, breaking over the reefs of rock on this iron-bound coast, and a strong current was running westward, we dared not, with second-rate sailors, venture the trip.

On our journey back from the "Fancy" estate, we stopped at a bungalow belonging to Mr. Dunlop, at Owia. Here we found a small waterfall, which probably is striking enough in the rainy season, but it was now miserably shrunk. From this we proceeded to Brown's, the Yorkshire cooper, who is a very respectable man. He has every essential comfort, and says that the Caribs treat him very well. He sent for a species of wild vine, which, when cut, distils very cold water, with which he recommended us to bathe our eyes, affected by the sun. His wife was invisible.

Since the Carib war against the English, in 1796, they have forfeited the boundaries allotted them in 1773, and now only hold their lands on sufferance from the British Government, dependent on their good behaviour. This, through the means of a nominal chief, they are obliged to acknowledge on the accession of every new Governor of St. Vincent. Beyond this, their chief, now residing to leeward of the island, has neither power nor control over them. The Caribs are great

Obea-men, and are extremely superstitious. They will never launch a canoe when strangers are looking on, because they strip, and will not suffer themselves to be seen naked. Decency has nothing to do with their scruples; but they have a superstition, that if seen so exposed, without the *wiacoo*, or girdle, which all these Indians wear, sudden death would be the result.

We passed several traps of reed, set for the agiouti, one of which held a prize, and it was immediately appropriated by our negro, George. We had it stewed for dinner, and it was not by any means bad.

We arrived by half-past two o'clock, without accident, at Rabacca. It is but right to say that Friday, the Carib, at whose house we stopped on our ascent, but who was not at home, came down to Rabacca to apologize, and to express his regret that he was not at home when we passed. All the polite men are not in Europe!

There are no monkeys indigenous to St Vincent, but there are parrots, of brown, blue, and yellow plumage, rather sombre in hue, though they are said to talk very distinctly.

The gree-gree is another species of the palm tribe, only found at the north end of the island. It differs from the-gru-gru, and other palms, in having the coarsest foliage of any. As yet its uses have not been discovered.

I bought of a Carib a Supple-Jack, for twopence, one that the negroes of Georgetown pronounced to be a "raal beauty dat, Massa; him de raal, raal Supple-Jack." This is not, as many people suppose, a cane

but a species of vine, of a red cedar colour, striated with ridges, and somewhat rough to the hands. It is peeled and dried with fire by the Caribs, and a good deal of trouble is taken in the preparation.

A stout stick is indispensable in this country, as you cannot go a quarter of a mile without coming to a mountain stream, which, as there are no bridges, must be crossed on stepping-stones, neither very flat nor regular in shape. These the negroes, being barefooted, hop over readily enough ; but boots and straps make but bad work of it. I got a very severe fall in attempting to cross the *débouchure* of one of these streams into the sea, and as there are no surgeons in these parts, had some trouble to tinker up the contusions, as in this country abrasions of the skin do not so readily heal as in Europe. Adhesive plaster, of white basilicon, that will not stick, is the only material to be obtained in Georgetown. Indeed, in West Indian travelling, it is necessary to carry always a small supply of medicaments, in case of such common accidents, whilst every clergyman and planter is *per force* compelled to practise pharmacy.

The West Indian negroes are the richest peasants in the world, having every comfort and many luxuries, according to their habits and ideas. Though exteriorly nothing, their houses inside are extremely comfortable. A handsome bedstead is always found, with four posts sticking up, of no earthly use, as there is rarely a tester, and the very idea of bed-curtains would make one faint here. This matter of a good bed seems to be the grand object of ambition, as are also a sideboard

well stocked with glasses, and a toilet-table, laid out *en règle*. I hired a house of two rooms, furnished, of a mulatto sergeant of police, for a guinea a week, which was adorned with a *dog-gerrotype* copy of the worthy landlord, and is further embellished with two prints of our sovereign lady the Queen, one of Prince Albert, and another of the illustrious pair. The upper stories of St. Vincent houses have no ceilings, the boarded and pointed roof covering all, and having short rafters across, and the upper parts of the partitions of the various rooms are open for the sake of a free circulation of air through them.

In such a climate, an arrangement like this is infinitely to be preferred to the English manner of having flat ceilings. Just above my head, a gang of jack-spaniards erected a mansion for themselves. I did not altogether like such ticklish neighbours so close to me, but had not the heart to violate the laws of hospitality so far as to eject them. In my garden there was a bread-fruit tree, a pa-paw in full bearing, and cocoa-nut palms. In every yard a huge black sow lies in a cesspool of her own creation; whilst gobbling turkeys, some half-dozen sheep and kids bleat about, and a nigger boy and wench, with a few curs, complete the establishment. I had kid's flesh for mutton, and sheep's milk instead of cow's. My worthy providing landlady was a picture in herself. She was very pious, but made free with the brandy whenever she had a chance. One minor nuisance I had, in the shape of a myriad of small ants, which overran everything, getting

into my water gurglets, of dark-red, unglazed earthenware, the sugar, &c. They are not without their uses, however, as on crushing an intruding cockroach, his mortal remains are instantly surrounded by one's ants, and quickly carried off for dinner.

West Indian kitchens are sad holes, generally mere sheds under the house, cellars, or a hut in the yard, the fire-place and culinary apparatus being a few sticks and stones, after the most approved fashion of a Highland sheiling or an Irish cabin. There is a degree of piggishness about all the domestic arrangements, and everything-in-commonism in these parts.

A Carib woman brought me some cray-fish, eight inches long, and black mullets, from the grand Sable River. "Dem suck de tones, Massa;" and sure enough there was a tremendous sucker, like that of a remora, with which they adhered so firmly to the plate in which they were brought, as to require some force to separate them. They had large heads, and were perfectly black in colour. The Carib woman first demanded ten dogs, *i. e.* sixpence for the lot; that being accorded, she then increased her price to a quarter of a dollar, and in consequence went away without making a sale, and we were minus our dish of fish.

Only the Rectory and two other houses in Georgetown have window-sashes, and of course the rest have no glass. The window-holes close with shutters; to a civilized person this is an extremely stupid custom, as one must either sit in a thorough draught, or have the

room darkened. The trade winds are always very strong; and if the weather window-places be open, one's papers, pens, and all light articles, are continually scattered about the floor. Candles are all covered with huge glass shades, to prevent them from flaring away; whilst no matter how seriously occupied, if a squall come on, as it does within the Tropics, without any sort of warning, a deluge of rain pours right in, and floods everything on the windward side of the house, and one has to scamper about to close the shutters when raining. All this might be avoided, by having the weather windows glazed. In opposition to the custom in the United States, West Indians are fond of the light, and have a great many windows in their houses. As there are neither closets nor chests of drawers to be found in this class of house, one is obliged to keep one's clothes in a trunk; but an infinite number of trifling articles, in constant use, are of necessity left exposed, and the pilfering habits of the negroes are notorious. Even the little plate (forks and spoons) which a traveller carries with him, must be duly marshalled at every meal, to see that none of it has been abstracted since the last muster. Were one suddenly called away from the dinner-table, black paws would instantly be popped into the savouries, and those constant attendants here, wine and brandy, would be sadly diminished in quantity.

St. Vincent is a mass of mountains, there is scarcely any level ground in it. The grand chain running through the centre of the island is called Morne-à-

Garou ; the highest mountains having besides distinctive names, as, Ben More, the Souffrière, Morne-à-Garou, the Grand and Petit Bon Homme, Mount St. Andrew, &c. The peculiarity is that these mountains, being the first to catch the vapours as they float over the wide Atlantic direct from the coast of Africa, three thousand miles distant, are enveloped in an unusual degree. The top of the Souffrière was only visible once during a whole fortnight, and then for a few minutes. The windward side of St. Vincent is on many accounts to be preferred, as the air is there pure and bracing, and there are no mosquitoes, whilst most of the vegetables of Europe can be successfully cultivated, in addition to those of the Tropics. The sea, however, is unavailable as a high road, the embarkation and landing in a canoe through such a surf being too perilous to be attempted as a general thing, certainly by white people.

One day I heard a curious croaking in the bushes like that of frogs, and found it to proceed from the Coocoo Manyoke, or rain-bird. This is a reddish-brown bird, somewhat larger than a pigeon, with a curved predatory beak. This croak is said to be the inevitable precursor of rain. There is a negro superstition against killing it. Lizards are plentiful here, and also fire-flies at night.

The sea-beach is thickly lined with the sea-side grape ; a curious bush, bearing a fruit not now in season, and abounding with guanas ; yet I cannot get these lazy Indians or negroes to go out and shoot one

for dinner, whilst they assure me that I could not of myself recognise one even were it close to me ; for like the camelion the guanas assume so closely the hues of the branches on which they bask, as to defy detection by the inexperienced. Their bite is extremely severe, and they lash with their long thong-like tails so smartly and unerringly as to draw blood wherever they strike.

Excepting among a few European gentlemen—clergymen and lawyers—there is very little intelligence in these islands, as a proof of which, intelligent Europeans quickly make themselves better acquainted with matters than the natives, and it is a common observation amongst the creoles when speaking of a stranger, “He knows more about the island than we do ourselves.” I found the greatest difficulty in getting two accounts to agree about things and places.

I heard from Mr. S——, of Rabacca, a confirmation of an often disputed fact, that an imprisoned scorpion committed suicide. He said that the only way he ever dealt with scorpions when he caught them was to put a little bit of stick across their backs, when they invariably curled their tails over and stung themselves to death, often with such violence as to be unable to withdraw the sting. They generally died within a few minutes. Whether this result be accidental or designed is still an open question. Mr. S—— is a person on whose word in such cases I would place the greatest reliance.

I took a stroll with a friend along the Grand Sable

Valley, then by a negro path mounted a ridge that overlooked the Congo Valley, as yet covered with primæval forest, and untouched by the hand or foot of man. It was a glorious sight, that tropical forest ! running up the sides of the mountains, and bristling with hoary trees of the most marked and picturesque character. The gru-gru, gree-gree, wild plantain, bamboo, trumpet-tree (*Cecropia*), cedars, and to me one quite new, the fern-tree (*Polypodium arboreum*), which grows here from six to thirty-five feet in height, although the tallest of those which we saw at this spot did not exceed twenty feet. To geologists this is an interesting tree, as corroborating the assumption that the order *Polypodiaceæ* were in the earlier epochs large trees, though now in Europe dwindled down to mere shrubs on a common ; and also as bearing out the conclusions drawn as to the once tropical climate of the north. Perhaps, too, at such a time, the Tropics themselves were incapable of sustaining vegetation or animal life of any sort ; that the earth in such low latitudes was once in a state of ignition and combustion. That even now the igneous matter is nearer the surface there than in the north, is, I think, borne out by the volcanoes of South America, and the earthquakes of that continent and the West Indian Islands ; that volcanic agency is still actively at work in the Mediterranean also, is proved by the raising and subsidence of various islands off the Azores and in the Sicilian Sea ; whilst there is but little doubt that so late as the time of Virgil the whole of that district near Naples, called the Phlegræan

fields, and from whence he drew his materials, at the fountain's head, for his Hades, was in a state of active combustion.

But to return, the fern-tree is one of the most beautiful trees in this beautiful island. At a little distance it looks like a plume of bright green ostrich feathers stuck upon a pole ; and an assemblage of many



thousands of these trees has an exquisite effect. Besides these, were a profusion of noble dark green trees, the name of which I could not ascertain. The

trumpet-tree (*Cecropia*) is not picturesque, but only curious. It only bears a few broad leaves on the upper branches, but is hollow, and was formerly used by the Indians to sound a conch-like blast, hence its name. The forests here are curious for the number of parasites growing on the branches of the trees, and for the festoons of a species of vine, pendant, like ropes, from tree to tree, or dropping from a great height to the ground. There was also a very characteristic plant, the *Roseau*, a sort of cane, bearing a spread of fan-like flags at its upper end, used by the negroes for thatching their houses.

What splendid solitudes these are! Across this valley of a mile in width rose another ridge, backed by the grand peaks of the Morne-à-Garou range, covered with its dark green suit—shrubs at a distance, tall trees when near. Here no white man penetrates—only the negro hunter, and the Carib; wild boars, manitous, and snakes, monopolise the soil.

From the inaccessible character of its approaches, this valley of excellent land will probably remain for years uncultivated, and at last only slowly give way before the pressure of an increasing population. It belongs to the Grand Sable estate.

We went to shoot the ramier, or wild pigeon, but were unsuccessful, as we had been misled by our sable guide, Cupid, the son of Castello, the mighty hunter of these parts. This sable Nimrod is a bold and intelligent, but to *me* unintelligible, negro. However, some of his wild boar stories are startling enough. Once a

boar, of well-known ferocity and strength, took the liberty of hunting him, when he took to a tree, under which his bristly antagonist posted himself, and laid in wait for him. The branch on which Castello was perched broke, and down he came upon the boar, and floored him ! Most men in such a situation would have tried to rise and get away—not so the negro hunter : he, on the contrary, pressed the boar down as hard as he could, until, with repeated digs with his knife, he killed it, not however before it had dragged him a considerable distance. He says that the hides of these wild hogs are so tough and thick that “de English balls flatten and spatter agin him ’kin, like lead ’trown in waater,” and he is obliged to use balls of “solder” (tin alloyed, I presume) in order to penetrate ; iron bullets would “poil um gun.”

Another time, an enormous boar at Three Rivers, killed one man, and so seriously ripped up another that subsequently he also died ; another, after having been struck with ball six times by white gentlemen, was supposed to have been made off with and eaten in the woods by a dog, much to the astonishment of these simpletons, though it afterwards appeared that the dog had been eaten by the boar. Castello was sent for, and with a boarding pike, which bent like lead against the boar’s hide, not “going the whole hog” at all, had a hand-to-hand fight with the brute, killing him at last with a ball, at the moment that he was himself nearly giving up. This monster boar “when him ’kin and ’crape, Massa,” measured six feet two inches, and stood

three feet in height, "him tush (tusks) so long, Massa," and the negro showed me the length of his fore arm. Castello has six small, but very fierce dogs, all pretty well gashed with wounds received in boar-hunting: here called "de wile hog."

Returning, my companion shot what is here called a mocking-bird, not like that of the United States, but rather a recent importation from the Spanish Main, inasmuch as many people remember when they first made their appearance in St. Vincent, although at present they are the most numerous birds in the island. This specimen was as large as a thrush, with a back of a mouse colour, light grey throat, and the under side of a faint lemon tint.

I took a stroll by myself over two of the splendid isolated mounds of two and three hundred feet in height that abound here. What exquisite situations for houses! in front, the wide, wild sea; behind, magnificent forests, and beautifully solemn mountains. Some thorns of the gru-gru put an end to my ramble, piercing my boot and sending me hopping home. The fallen branches of this singular tree are very dangerous to horses, which often get lamed by them. The thorns average three inches and a half in length, although I have at home one that measures four inches and four-tenths, and another four inches and eight-tenths. They are as hard as spike nails, and a good deal sharper. The wood of the gru-gru is split, and used for house building, and the grub is eagerly sought after and roasted by the negroes as a dainty,

and even by some of the whites. The tree also bears a nut only eaten by children.

The prevailing disorder of St. Vincent is a low fever peculiar to the island, and known as the colony fever. The symptoms are said not to be very febrile, excepting that the pulse will beat one hundred and twenty, and those attacked die very quickly. Prior to dissolution the fever quits them, but they die of exhaustion, as once so thoroughly prostrated in a climate like this, people can never rally. It only attacks adults of twenty-one years and upwards; children are never affected by it.

I do not exactly know whether that which is new to me is equally so to the scientific world: but things are constantly dropping at one's feet—sometimes a lizard from a tree, sometimes a centipede from the ceiling, a spider, or some equally disagreeable fellow-lodger. I took up an odd-looking conical thing that seemed to have dropped from the clouds. It was evidently a curiously constructed *nidus* of some sort or other, strongly formed outside of bits of stick a quarter of an inch long, the inside being lined with a cotton-like substance. I brought it home however, and empty as it appeared, put it down (safely, as I thought), and when I went to look for it, lo! it had disappeared. In a day or two after it dropped again unexpectedly at my feet, and a second time I secured it. On showing it to a friend he pronounced that within there was a large caterpillar grub; and sure enough, a very large black and white gentleman of that genus popped out his head,

but seeing that the coast was not clear, withdrew it in double-quick time ; nor were all our efforts to drag him bodily forth of any avail. I put him, house and all, on a mahogany sideboard, and found that in a few minutes he had spun a silken cord, and had apparently come to an anchor. On my friend taking leave, I went to examine the creature, but he had again disappeared, and I never saw him afterwards. It was a chrysolite, called by the children here a Ham, producing a large butterfly, and that is all that I could learn about it.

The common spider of St. Vincent is a monstrous insect, or reptile ; the circumference of the circle formed by his feet would, at the least, be nine inches. He seems to carry about with him a large milk-white hassock, or stool, more than half an inch in diameter, and looking like a leviathan peppermint lozenge. In spite of its formidable appearance, this mammoth *arachne* is said to be harmless.

The agiouti, to which I have before referred, is in colour and form like an enormous rat, of a foot and a half in length, but without a tail. It is strictly herbageous, burrows, and has many habits in common with the marmotte tribe. Were it cooked in the same manner, it would be as palatable as jugged hare, but West Indian cookery is very peculiar, and not particularly good. Fowls here are invariably execrable, with yellow skins as coarse as a nutmeg grater, and sinewy purple muscles beneath ; there is no meat on the breast, and they are so tough as scarcely to be eaten even when

stewed for several hours. Capons are better, but they cost a dollar each. The mutton, as I have already remarked, is bad, but the mode of dressing makes it infinitely worse. Chops are cut up into little bits scarcely larger than Turkish kabobs, and fried, of course, as I believe there is not a gridiron to be found in these islands. Everything in the way of meat is as dry as a chip.

I would recommend any botanist coming to the West Indies to bring with him a *hortus siccus*, twenty-four feet by twelve, that is if he wish to secure specimens of the most characteristic and interesting plants and trees. The bread-fruit tree has an enormously large serrated leaf, as also the banana, with an infinity of others. The banana and the plantain trees are so perfectly alike that half the creole inhabitants even cannot distinguish one from the other. The only perceptible difference is in the colour of the stem, the banana being of a dark reddish-brown, the plantain of a whiter hue. The plantain is merely a variety of the banana.

Literature is at a very low ebb in the West Indies, yet there are a few works that seem to be omnipresent—the “Pictorial Times,” and the “Illustrated London News”—those wonderful publications which should we ever relapse again into the dark ages, will strike the re-illuminators of the world with astonishment. “Punch,” too, that brilliant concentration of satire and talent unequalled in any country, is in every house.

In the hut of Brown, the cooper, at Sandy Bay, in the midst of the Caribs, I saw a volume of "Chambers' Edinburgh Journal," whilst in houses of a better class "Murray's Colonial Library" is very common, to which I think that a reprint or two of good works on the West Indies would, to so uninstructed a people, be a very desirable addition. Nothing, indeed, can do an isolated community so much good, as to know the estimate formed of them by intelligent strangers; and now that, by the emancipation of the negroes, party spirit has all but subsided, the unexaggerated truth will sooner or later come to light. Those books on the emancipation side that I have glanced over are very absurd and mediocre.

I know of no part of the world so romantic as the West Indies. In Switzerland the mountains are higher, it is true, but the vegetation is not half so beautiful. St. Vincent is full of lovely little valleys and isolated knolls, offering the most exquisite sites for houses, and presenting the most delightful panoramic views. I walked up the length of one, the Indian Valley, a mile from Georgetown. This valley terminated in a ridge, now choked up with that beautiful pest the gru-gru, the branches of which wither and drop off beneath, and woe be to the incautious explorer who treads on one. A gentleman once being closely beset by a wild boar was for safety compelled to climb a gru-gru, and was dreadfully lacerated. This tree is rarely allowed to grow near a house, as there would be no end to accidents, especially if there were children. Sharks

by sea, and the gru-gru, jack-spaniards, and wild boars by land, with one or two shrubs which blister the hand, are the drawbacks of tropical explorations.

I thought it odd enough in Barbadoes to have but a single thin cotton coverlet over one at night, and in Kingston only a single sheet; but was perfectly non-plussed at Georgetown, when I saw a sheet alone covering the mattress and nothing at all above! This was rather too much of the *al fresco*, and fortunately I obtained a sheet. I verily believe that three parts of the attacks of ague, so common here, arise from the great difference of temperature between the day and the night—ten degrees are a common fall—whilst the absence of all covering at night, save a shirt, will lower the temperature at least four degrees more.

My walk up Indian Valley terminated in sundry aches and pains, rheumatic twitchings, and other indications of having taken cold; so I had recourse at once to the West Indian specific, a basin of lemon-grass tea, taken hot in bed. Whether this fine sudorific has been introduced into our own *materia medica* at home, I cannot say; but if not, it would be a most valuable addition to the medical botany of England, far superior to compound ipecacuanha, or the nauseous drugs of which sudorifics are usually compounded, since it is of an extremely agreeable flavour and the effects are very powerful. Whether when desiccated it would retain its virtues remains to be proved. The formula is, to take a handful of the leaves, infuse them

in hot water, and sweeten *à son goût*, but without milk; in fact, to make it exactly the same as you would ordinary tea, and drink it in bed. I have taken many sudorifics; but never anything equal in power to lemon-grass tea. It has nipped many a fever in the bud.

Georgetown is a curious little village, so secluded on a tiny point of land and so surrounded by trees, as to be invisible at a very short distance. It boasts, two stores and a few hucksters' shops; and as there are very few of the coloured people but have some property, its population is a very idle one. Now, supposing that a man has a house of his own and rents a little bit of land as a provision-ground—a very little work, four days out of the six, will supply him with money for clothes or trifling luxuries. Saturday is devoted to the provision-ground, Monday is by prescription an idle day, and during the rest of the week a little work is done, but a large price demanded for it; so gossip, scandal, and laziness are the order of the day. In front of the village is the Grand Sable estate, and beyond this tower the gloomy mountains of Morne-à-Garou, round whose pointed peaks the clouds are incessantly chasing each other. In addition to the Episcopal church there is a large Wesleyan Methodist church and school. The Wesleyan minister is said to be a very worthy person. There are also Bible-classes, Sunday-schools—a “society,” a “sisterhood” (of anything but nuns, however), and a grog-shop, all in constant requisition. The rector has just scandalised

the whites by marrying a mulatto, by which he becomes brother-in-law to the grocer of the village.

The worst of the West Indies is the necessity there is of drinking: the first offer made you on entering a house is "take a drink?" Of course you will—you arrive hot and exhausted, and a cool glass of sangaree, or brandy-and-water (weak), is tendered you, which you imbibe. This is a consequence of the exhausting quality of the climate, and so you go on. Father Matthew himself would here take a *leetle* brandy to qualify his water, he could not help it; and this is the real danger of a tropical climate: the exhaustion is great, and it is of necessity supplied with stimulants.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FETISH—VISIT TO THE SOUFFRIERE—THE OLD AND NEW
CRATERS—THE SOLDIER'S GRAVE—RIDE TO CHATEAUBELAIR
—THE WALLIBOO—CUMBERLAND VALLEY—BARRIOULI—MODE
OF LIFE OF THE DENIZENS.

ON the 20th of March I set off from Rabacca, at a little past seven o'clock. A.M., with Mr. M—— and Mr. S—— to visit the Souffrière, the pride and glory of St. Vincent. We passed through the cane pieces of "Lot 14," where we saw some canes planted in beautifully ploughed land, crossed in chequers, forming most accurate squares, in each of which two, three, and in some even as many as five or six canes were planted. The ground was undulating, and the ploughman, a Scotsman, was working with three horses to his plough.

We got to the negro provision-grounds through thickets of bread-fruit trees and bamboos, planted for fencing land, and roseaus for wattling negro houses. On a spot of cultivated land a few yards from the path,

we encountered a curious piece of negro superstition. It was a miniature coffin a foot long, stuck on a pole three feet high and planted upright in the earth. This was a sort of taboo, and no negro would dare to steal the yams and plantains of the knowing owner; sometimes the skull of an ox is set up for the same purpose. We were wicked enough to take out this fetish, and plant it in the middle of the path along which every negro must pass, and where on our return in the evening it still remained *in terrorem*.

From this our road lay along the sharp edges of a succession of narrow ridges averaging four feet wide, leaving in several places room only for a person to pass along singly. On either side were deep ravines, the sides of which were covered with wild plantains and other tropical shrubs. This part of the journey required great attention, as a slip of the foot would have sent us flying down a precipice of two hundred feet. The road is, however, often passed on horseback, although many serious accidents do occur. The body of one young man who was known to be *en route*, yet did not arrive, was not found for three months, when of course it was a mere skeleton; and skittish horses topple down headlong; indeed, I would much rather trust to my own feet than to those of any quadruped. In many spots if two persons on horseback were to meet, they could neither pass each other nor back without great risk, if at all. The shrubs and plants which line the sides of these perpendicular precipices, take off to the eye much of the actual danger, though they

would not for a moment save a man. Lofty trees, the tops of which were below us, were as usual here choked with parasites; one of which, the wild pine, is a most useful ally to the thirsty traveller, as the leaves form a reservoir of pure water, a good one yielding nearly half a pint, although it requires some practice to catch it. Each leaf as it is bent down forms a spout, the pointed end of which being applied to the mouth gives a draught. We also passed several pine-apples which, however, had been planted. Occasionally, through the trees, we caught a glimpse of the dark forests of Morne-à-Garou, abounding with wild boars.

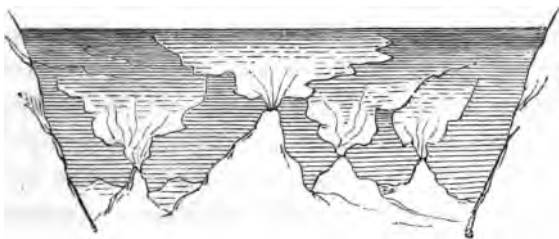
We arrived at the "dry river-bed" by nine o'clock. This was our first resting-place; and we had previously sent a negro boy with the *provende* and sundry bottles of shrub and ale, which did not taste the worse for a walk of five miles before breakfast, to an elevation of some seventeen hundred feet. The "dry river-bed" is a most romantic spot, the bed itself being formed of compact lava-rock of the most massive character, covered with detached lumps of cinereous, vesicular lava of several varieties, that of black basalt or trap being the most common. To those acquainted with volcanoes, the molten character of the once ignited matter is very apparent, though it has been declared by ill-informed travellers that there is not a particle of lava to be found on the Souffrière! It is, in fact, all lava, though they do not know it. Lava and scoria vary in their component parts, from real metallic clay to trap, rock, and pumice; the one as heavy as the clinker

from an iron-foundry, the other but little heavier than a sponge. There was a shallow pool of limpid water here just deep enough to cool one's bottles, and beds of black volcanic sand; we were surrounded with lofty knolls, absolutely feathered with bushes of the most picturesque character, between which, far above us, we could see the locality to which we were journeying. At half-past nine we left the dry river-bed, and then commenced the climb. Sharp rocky ascents, full of scoria and dry volcanic sand, mere triturated cinder, rendered the walking very bad, and this sort of road lasted all the way up. The sides of the precipices were covered with lofty arborescent ferns, the most elegant tree of the tropics, spreading out above like those African feather-dusters common to our drawing-rooms in England, and obviously giving the Easterns the first ideas of an umbrella, so perfect is the resemblance. As we mounted, we left these trees below us, and a short bright-green herbage, with great quantities of wild water-holding pine-tufts, covered the extensive downs or moors that we were traversing; the whole so completely assuming the character of the larger Scotch mountains, that it was difficult to imagine oneself in the West Indies. Black snakes are said to abound here, but the morning being cool, we did not see any. We stopped to refresh at Jacob's Well, where a broken bottle, *pro bono publico*, does duty for a cup in replenishing with a draught of cool water the exhaustion of travelling. Here we filled our bottles, as at the summit there is no available water save that of the wild pine.

We arrived at the top of the mountain, three thousand five hundred feet, by ten o'clock A.M. The footpath brought us abruptly up to the edge of the old crater, and here, three hundred feet below, lay a beautiful little lake of bottle-green water, surrounded by precipices disposed in basaltic circles, although no columns are defined as at the Giant's Causeway. These volcanic cliffs were covered with bright green herbage and shrubs. Still far above us towered Ben More, hidden in the clouds. Beyond lay the bright blue sea; and below was Chateaubelair, with its bay and headlands, smiling in the bright sunshine and approached by the footpath on which we were now standing. This road is often traversed on horseback, and from Rabacca may be about fourteen miles, equaling up and down the mountain a walk of at least twenty-five miles on level ground. It is constantly traversed by negroes—women and boys as well as men, carrying on their heads Carib baskets of sundries to sell at Georgetown.

On a fine day, this is a very lovely spot, but after Etna, or even Vesuvius, there is nothing very terrific about it. The lake below is circular, and before the eruption of 1812, was a mound of sulphur, on which pic-nics were given. This sank down, and water usurped its place. But even now the same action is going on: the water is generally of a deep bottle-green, yet in given spots the ebullitions of sulphur beneath the surface are very apparent, showing a bright yellowish-green spot, which is continually spreading and contracting in size, and varying in colour; sometimes

extending all over the lake, and then, in a few moments, almost disappearing. The action of the various boccas of sulphureous jets below is very distinct ; yet as the vapour so impregnated with sulphur has not force enough to overcome the resistance of the water, compressed as it is by the weight of the atmosphere, no



ebullitions are apparent on the surface. Various stories are in circulation about the lake being unfathomable, and there was once a bark canoe upon it ; but I believe the assertions as to its depth are without any foundation, because the deposits of sulphur are obviously filling it up, and not improbably another cone will rise and absorb the water. Those who have seen the Solfatara at Naples, will understand the subaqueous action going on here. Like all volcanic agencies, the action is extremely irregular, hence the puzzle of the ever-shifting colour of the bright yellow sulphur beneath the dark green water. One cone is nearer the surface, or higher than the rest, though, like a sand-bank at sea, a ruffle of the water may level it for a time. One thing is obvious, that hitherto no one acquainted with the phenomena of volcanoes had been

up here, or the cause would at once have been seen. Sometimes people scramble down to the water, a fool-hardy adventure enough. This crater, from lip to lip, is said to be a mile across, giving a circumference of three miles, in my opinion far too much for the fact. If the water, at its level, be a quarter of a mile in diameter, it is as much as it is. From the north side, Ben More springs up to a height of four thousand feet, the Souffrière proper being only three thousand five hundred feet, but it is *de facto* all one mountain. The characteristic of the mountain is, the being furrowed by myriads of small ravines, ploughed up by the torrents incidental to high mountains. Lieutenant Caddie's view of this crater gives an excellent idea of the place.

The day was remarkably cool, and we saw every lion in great perfection—a very *rare* thing indeed. After a time we walked to the crater of 1812, separated from the old one only by a single ridge, so narrow and rugged, that the most fool-hardy would alone attempt to cross, and which silly feat can only be done by riding it astride like a horse's back. One light-headed gentleman, when on the worst part, fainted! and nobody could go to his assistance, so he was obliged to come to as he best could, and get off the ridge again.

There is a very distinct echo here. The new crater is deeper than the old one, and makes one giddy to look into it. It is a scene of volcanic desolation—bare precipices, scored into ravines by torrents of rain. At the bottom is a pool of unwholesome-looking, dirty,

light green water. To this my companions descended, and got thoroughly frightened for their pains, as they encountered obstacles invisible from above. Now and then, the mighty bowl became filled with dense atmospheric vapours, hiding everything, and then the sensation of looking down was awful. This was the cauldron that in 1812 did all the mischief, pouring out molten seas of dark grey lava, which burnt up forests, furnishing charcoal even now, and laid waste all within its reach. But though bad enough to look at, there is nothing here at all equal in desolation to the *Vale del Bove* of Etna. Indeed, from the very bright green foliage, everything on the Souffrière wears a cheerful appearance, fit abode for sheep and shepherds, barring that there is nothing that sheep would eat, and but little water. The mountain, however, is not always so calm, being sometimes as wild as it was now placid. Dangerous mists come on so suddenly, that one of my companions, Mr. M——, assured me he had been obliged to lie down, and dared not move a step until the fog had passed. Violent rains, too, render the journey most harassing, spoiling the clothes of the traveller, and in half an hour rendering him almost barefoot. A few yards below the edge of the old crater is "the soldier's grave," over which is erected a blackened post, to the memory of John Neil, a sergeant in the 66th regiment, a fine athletic young man of twenty-six, who in 1835 died up here, a fact that is perpetuated in some desperately bad verses. This poor creature was up here with two of the privates of the regiment, and got

rather tipsy. Dense mists came on, and his companions pushing forward, he missed his path, and they were afraid to go back to look for him. So exposed, the night killed him. Search was made, and his hat was found close to the edge of the crater, whence it was for some time supposed that he had fallen in. Subsequently, however, the body was found, and buried by a clergyman, an inquest having been previously held upon it on the mountain. In the event of any such casualty, there was once a well-constructed hut, not very far distant; but a party of officers, on a drunken "lark" (frolic is too nice a term for such persons), pulled it down, and threw the materials into the lake! and this capital fun was allowed to go unpunished by the proper authorities.

A shelter from the wind was, by subscription, dug out of the side of the rock, for the horses of the subscribers; but as it is not roofed in, it affords not the least shelter from the weather. Twenty dollars would make a refuge of it, where, in emergencies, lives might be saved. I hope that such disgraceful actions as the destruction of the hut could not occur a second time, without placing in jeopardy the commissions of the aggressors; indeed, for the sake of the army generally, we must hope that they were the officers of a condemned regiment.

Altogether the Souffrière is a beautiful mountain, on a fine day, with plenty of supplies and agreeable society, but not at all worth any imminent risk of wind and weather to visit. As a high road, however, I

would counsel any stranger desirous of crossing from one point of the island to another, to take it in his way. Loch-na-gar, in Aberdeenshire, is a far wilder place; and the Souffrière will not compare with Vesuvius, much less with Etna. Excepting in one or two spots, the features are too tame. There is probably more actual danger at the Souffrière, if a person chose to put himself on the right spot for it, than either of the Italian volcanoes, but not else. On the occasion of my ascent, the leeward coast was very clear, but the Carib country was generally invisible. Once or twice we obtained a glimpse of its well-known features, and then all was concealed by the clouds that usually veil these mountains.

We thoroughly enjoyed our "maroon," as, though a good pull up hill, all about us was delightfully cool and invigorating, and we had neither rain nor mists, but of the higher peak, Ben More, we saw nothing. I did not see a particle of sulphur anywhere, nor any indications of it, beyond that diffusing itself in the tarn of the old crater.

At half-past two P.M. we commenced our descent, and sharp work it was for our shoes, the scoria cutting them to pieces. We got to the river bed by half-past three, when we discussed a reserved bottle of pale ale, and then set forward again, arriving at Rabacca by a little past five in the afternoon.

On the subsequent morning we started at ten A.M. from the Waterloo estate, to cross the Souffrière to Chateaubelair, and through a friend I obtained the loan

of a fine mule from Mr. Proud, the blacksmith of the estate. Mr. Proud is a native of Newcastle-on-Tyne, and is a very intelligent person, now following his trade as a mere amusement.

Our first stay was the "dry river bed," which looked even more romantic than on our former visit, and would make a capital *locale* for the trysting-place of a party of freebooters. On our way we overtook Mr. S——, the stipendiary magistrate, and his family, and joined company to the top. Clouds gathered above, and we had a smart shower of rain, while the mists drove past in rather an ominous manner. We arrived at the crater by half-past one P.M., none the worse for a *déjeuner à la fourchette*. Near the bowl I killed a black snake, which measured exactly six feet in length. They are said to be harmless.

At three P.M. we left the old crater, and commenced the descent, the *facilis descensus*. On the leeward side of the island, the character of the mountain is very different to that of the windward, the scenery being much softer, and the shrubs and foliage infinitely more luxuriant. Our path lay along ridges covered with the most sweetly-scented grasses, growing as high as one's knees, interspersed with thickets of tall roseaus. The views of Morne-à-Garou, with its solemn forests of gloomiest green, were surpassingly beautiful. Though not quite so high as the Souffrière, it is an infinitely finer mountain.

We arrived at the first cane piece at a quarter to five o'clock. I had been accompanied over the mountain

by a negro lad of ten years of age as a guide, and he also carried my light traps, assisted by a little brother not more than six years old, who was going over only for the pleasure of the trip. They had not brought any provisions with them, trusting for supplies to luck. Though great cowards, the negroes have astonishing powers of endurance, and my two boys did not starve.

The first estate we reached was Walliboo, where I had been instructed to apply for a horse to carry me over the Walliboo river. We met a well-dressed negro, who seemed awfully afraid that I should enter the presence of his highness, the manager, and told me that I must hire a person to carry me across, as I could never get over alone, the water would give me cold. He exaggerated the dangers in such a manner, as to give me the impression that I had to cross a most furious river, which might sweep me out to sea, and ended his doleful tale by demanding half a dollar to carry me over. However, I was somewhat incredulous, and I went on without him.

The bed of the Walliboo is of loose shingly stones, bearing obvious marks that sometimes it is capable of becoming a fierce torrent. On coming to the first branch, however, I found it was only about four feet wide, and about three inches deep, and putting my stick in the centre, I hopped over it with ease. Traversing the dry bed of the river, I came to the second branch, the river being divided into two. This was a more formidable affair—being about four

yards in width, and a foot deep. I made my two little negroes wade across, which even the *piccaninny* did with perfect impunity; and then, taking off my socks and shoes, I waded across in something like half a minute. And so ended this terrible passage of the Walliboo!

We passed through Richmond Valley, a lovely spot, environed with exquisitely formed mountains. We arrived by dusk at Chateaubelair very little fatigued, though the distance across the mountain from Rabacca may be fourteen miles. Chateaubelair is merely a little village, having two or three stores, but no inn. I stayed with the Rev. T. G. Connell, the curate.

After a rest of one whole day, I left Chateaubelair in a canoe passage boat, which plies between this village and Kingston, a run of twenty-three miles. I had heard that the leeward coast of St. Vincent was very beautiful, and therefore purposed landing at Cumberland Valley, and walking over the mountains to Barrioulli, at which place the boat would on the following morning take me up again. I noticed on Petit Bordel Point, in Chateaubelair Bay, the ends of some horizontal basaltic columns. There is a little rugged island close to the shore, but as the landing is not good, and there is no water, it is uninhabited. All along the coast a series of vertical basaltic formations could be traced, the columns rather indicated than defined: also a great deal of tufa, based on what appeared to be diluvial drift, or conglomerate. The coast is very bold, and, except on particular spots, in-

accessible. Our boat was manned by five negroes, who rowed without cessation : the captain also was a black. These fellows shaved the rocks in a way calculated to make a novice on this coast stare, the reflux of the sea alone sending the boat off again ; however, they are fully masters of their trade. One thing I have noticed, that wherever you find a black captain or a negro in a position of command, though the skin be black, the features are almost invariably Caucasian, a large straight, or hooked nose predominating, and the whole character of the face having rather a Jewish cast. The expression is generally very stern and harsh, and the man himself taciturn.

We passed several sugar estates—Petit Bordel, Rose Bank, Tremacau, &c., each having a pretty little valley to itself, backed by high mountains. At a quarter to eight we arrived at Cumberland, about five miles by sea.

Cumberland Valley is a celebrated spot in these parts. I saw the manager of the estate, Mr. H. H——, to whom I had a letter, and who civilly walked with me as far as the river, which, like the rest, is a shallow mountain torrent, a foot deep, and a few yards wide. A negro lifted me across, and was perfectly contented with half a bitt (twopence).

Cumberland Valley has the character of being the most rainy in St. Vincent, and several flying showers amply sustained its credit for moisture. The “sight” here is a range of basaltic columns, a quarter of a mile from the road-side, on a high bluff, situated in a narrow glen. They are about one hundred and fifty

feet in height, but though the basaltic formation is apparent, it is not particularly well defined. The best term that I can use to describe it is, that the columns are so dilapidated and weather-worn, that their regularity can only be traced by a geological eye. They are jagged and broken, and are stained of a light grey and a sandy-yellow.

I returned to the beaten track, and ascended by a good road a tolerably high mountain. The ascent was rather a task, as the leeward side of St. Vincent is infinitely warmer than the windward, and exhausting in proportion. We passed some enormously large leaves, which in certain spots I observed lined the rocks. Each leaf was about two feet long, and a foot and a half broad, the under side showing white in the sun. On inquiry, I found it to be, in negro nomenclature, the chaney-tree, which is all that I could learn about it. I observed some splendid bamboos, of a dark apple-green, at least fifty feet in height, and six inches in diameter. I climbed to the top of a ridge, on which is a small iron room quite isolated, and a brick house, belonging to the Belle Isle estate. From a *plateau* of greensward I had a noble prospect; but the place is too much exposed to thunder-storms, and the want of water must be a serious objection to a residence at such an altitude. Some sugar-works close by seem to have been abandoned. I found up here, as well as on the Souffrière, a large black wasp, shining in a gorgeous coat of mail. These fellows are larger than the jack-spaniards, and carry their

long legs trailing behind them as they fly, much in the same manner.

I descended to Barrioulli, and after a hot, thirsty walk, and nothing to drink, arrived by one P.M. at the Rev. E. G. S——'s, where I was received with much courtesy and hospitality. Barrioulli is a small village, containing a neat Episcopal church and school, a Wesleyan chapel and school, and two or three stores. In such out-of-the-way places, shopkeepers are great men. The store is a sort of huckster's shop, and has an odour like a Neapolitan grocer's on the Toledo.


Although I had introductions to the two great points of my journey, I made it a principle, when there, to ascertain if there were any means by which one might avoid an intrusion on strangers, and found that Barrioulli had its house in which a traveller could obtain a night's lodging. There is no enterprise in St. Vincent, and all accommodation for travellers is exceedingly behind the rest of the world, Occasionally a coloured widow will receive a person; but the inhabitants being acquainted, generally go the houses of the clergy, or of the managers of estates.

Barrioulli has a curious reef of rocks called the Bottle and Glass, and behind the village is a high knoll, having a mural escarpment of tolerably defined basaltic rocks.

At nine A.M., I started in the Chateaubelair passage boat for Kingston, it being scarcely worth while to walk, as all the views here may be seen equally

well from the sea. Layou is a village, but the rest of the places are mere estates. These smiling valleys, backed by bold mountains, might be made the seat of very pleasant abodes, but sugar-works are as sadly unromantic as Manchester cotton-mills.

St. Vincent is certainly a noble island, as well as highly salubrious, but the windward side is to be preferred for health. The West India islands generally are by no means the bugbears they were formerly considered. The change is not in the climate, but in the habits of Europeans, who, instead of going drunk to bed at two o'clock every morning, now retire to rest sober at nine or ten. But even yet many of the West India habits are so opposed to common sense, the wonder is that the people live half as long as they do. Sea-bathing is, from sharks and sea-eggs, dangerous; but almost every house has a cold bathing tank, into which they get and soak, so that no reaction can possibly take place. A shower bath, that obvious and cheap resource in a hot climate, producing all the effect necessary for health, is almost, if not quite, unknown. About Kingston there are a few tanks for supplying the sugar-works with water, and here a few of the whites bathe. The habit of sitting in thorough draughts is also fatally prevalent. In St. Vincent I have suffered much more from cold, consequent on the imprudent habits of the people, than from heat. I believe that a rational person, with correct ideas on the subject of health, may live longer without sickness in St. Vincent than he would in England, but the people generally



are extremely ill-informed on most of the subjects that form part of the education of Europeans.

It is a curious fact, however, that healthy as St. Vincent is, St. Lucia, only eighteen miles from the north point of the island, has the worst climate in all the West Indies, Tobago perhaps excepted. St. Lucia also abounds with venemous reptiles.

CHAPTER VIII.

BEQUIA—INDUSTRY AND MOUNT PLEASANT ESTATES—MARRIAQUA VALLEY—CANE END—ADVENTURE IN A MOUNTAIN-GULLY—ENCOUNTER WITH A SNAKE—CARRIACOU—BELFONT—BARBARIC MELODY.

ONE morning, I went over to Bequia, nine miles across the strait from Kingston. Since the emancipation of the negroes, this once fertile little island has gone to absolute ruin. Out of eleven sugar estates formerly cultivated, only four are still worked. The fatal mistake of allowing negroes to hold land has ruined the whites, for, as a population, all are independent of labour. Land in lots of eighty feet by forty is selling for sixteen dollars, about three pounds seven shillings sterling.

The Bay of Bequia is as smooth as a mill-pond; ducks swim in it, and it abounds with fish. I saw a man stand on the beach with a hook and line, and in half an hour he caught six green-backed cavalli, each weighing from two and a half to three pounds, or fifteen pounds of fish! any one of which would be a dinner for two people, besides instantly disposing of the remainder at fourpence a pound! Under such cir-

cumstances, how is it to be expected that people will work hard, except for luxuries unheard of amongst the peasantry of any other part of the world. The common bread in use here is cassada, a root, the farina of which is baked in thin cakes, similar in form to the Scotch oatmeal cakes, only far superior in flavour. A garden, such as two lots would afford, will grow cassada enough for the year's consumption, besides yams and plantains. Most of the men have in addition fish-pots, which all the year round would give them a dinner, with only the trouble of baiting and hauling them in. "In fact," said a white inhabitant of Bequia to me, "I don't see how a person here could starve, unless he were to lie down and refuse to help himself to food." So much for the "naked negro!"

Bequia has great capabilities for small capitalists. Aloes grow abundantly, but no one attends to their cultivation. Sugar-making seems to absorb all the ideas of those who think of making money; but to make sugar profitably a large capital is required, and a thousand things easier of cultivation are overlooked. Bequia unfortunately has no rivers, and only two springs, so that the inhabitants are dependent on the rains for a supply of water. The island is between eight and nine miles in length, with a breadth too irregular to be defined. It produces cinnamon trees, as valuable as Bermudian cedar, for door-posts, rafters, &c., as it never decays; and I saw here that curious tree, the East Indian banyan.

Walking along I picked up some tempting-looking

apples, and wondered why such nice fruit were allowed to lie scattered on the ground; they proved to be the apples of the deadly manchineal. The smell is very like that of the common English apple, and the taste is said not to be dissimilar. All animals reject them, save the crab, which feasts on them with impunity, and becomes poisonous in consequence. The juice is said to be highly acrid, blistering the throat and stomach.

I visited the Industry, one of the four estates now in cultivation. Seven years ago, this fine property was purchased for seven thousand pounds; now it would only bring two thousand five hundred or three thousand pounds. Under the able management of Mr. R——, it is in a high state of cultivation.

I saw a "soldier crab" snugly ensconced in a wilk-



shell, and took it home to draw. The nip is terrible, and generally takes out the piece of flesh, whenever any one is heedless enough to come within the sphere of its action. It is a land crab, burrowing under the roots

of trees. In Bequia, Town, a little village on the sea-beach, the sandy ground is literally perforated by land crabs, forming deep and dangerous holes, into which horses sometimes stumble.

From the Industry I went to Mount Pleasant, at present abandoned. Here I got some ripe guavas, a very poor fruit, and not to be indulged in with impunity. Coming home I saw a very large yellow snake, coiled round the stump of a decayed cocoa-nut tree, but having no weapons we were obliged to content ourselves with pelting him, when he slowly retired to his hole. My companion pronounced it to be the largest that he had ever seen in Bequia.

Though bold and pretty, Bequia is not to be compared in picturesqueness with St. Vincent. After visiting all the interesting localities I returned to Georgetown.

I regret to say that Puseyism is making great progress in the West India Islands. With one exception the clergy seem determined to force this system down the throats of the people. The Rev. John Checkley,* Rural Dean of St. Vincent, perhaps the most erudite, scientific, and talented clergyman in the West Indies, is, very much to his honour, opposed to it. As a body, the clergy of the West Indies are very inferior men, full of small policies; and Codrington College, Barbadoes, from whence the majority emanate, is perhaps the lowest clerical institution in the world—Maynooth, in Ireland, always excepted.

* Alas ! dead since this was written.


I left Mount Agiouti to see another favourite spot in St. Vincent, the Marriaqua Valley. Our route was over a high mountain road called the Gommee Road. The whole way up was dotted with negro houses and provision grounds, the greater part freehold property, and each plot of ground was sufficient to make the holder virtually independent of any labour beyond that of cultivating his own soil, so that if he chose to work for others he must of necessity become rich, and that the majority positively are. Unless some energetic movement take place in England to rescue the whites from the jaws of the blacks, I do not see what is to prevent the latter from monopolizing all the soil, and ousting the white man entirely.

On attaining the summit of the Gommee ridge, I looked down into the rich and extensive Marriaqua Valley, which, taken altogether, is the most important part of the island. This valley is, for the island, very extensive, perhaps two miles and a half wide, and from the coast to the mountains by which it is backed it may be five or six miles long. The land is undulating and ridgy, and watered by two mountain streams, here called rivers. It is very beautiful, certainly, but not so much so as several other spots that I have seen in St. Vincent. It is too wide and too long for the details of the mountains to be distinctly seen. The hoary forests, so awful when near, look from the distance mere shrubs ; and two mountains, the Grand and Petit Bon Homme, block out the Marriaqua from the interior.

I went on to Cane End, one of the fine estates belonging to Mrs. K——, a celebrated black lady of these parts; and was most hospitably received by her and her son-in-law, a white gentleman, who manages the estate. Mrs. K—— is one of those rare exceptions in the black races that one finds here and there, being a clever woman of business, quiet, and not undignified—a negress in nothing but *colour*. She has a long aquiline nose, and thin lips, in fact, possesses that Caucasian face which poetry assumes Othello to have had. Her daughter is a bright, handsome mulatto, the late husband of Mrs. K—— having been a white man, who by his industry acquired this really handsome property.

Hoping to get a good view of the Marriaqua Valley I ascended Mesopotamia Hill, a small mountain of perhaps one thousand feet high, a short distance above Mrs. K——'s house. I left the beaten path, and scrambled up a negro track, leading along the extreme top of the ridge, for most of the mountains here are as sharp on the top as a wedge, having steep precipitous sides, covered with mountain shrubbery, as treacherous and uncertain in its hold as straws to a drowning man. This deceitful foliage often hides danger, whilst the long pendant *withes*, and thorny parasites, increase the embarrassment, and tear the clothes and flesh. I went as far as I could, but the under-brush was too tall and too thick to admit of any view, so I returned to a huge boulder of conglomerate, of many tons weight, which was perched up here, quite isolated from any apparent

neighbouring formation. The ridge on which I was, was not above two feet wide, often not a foot. I followed what seemed to be the right path, letting myself down by the pendant roots of trees, and soon found that I was out of the track by which I had come. However, as it went down somewhere or other I believed that I could make my way, and must soon arrive at some reconnoitring spot, whence I could take a fresh departure. So down I plunged, nothing doubting, though often arrested by three or four of that interlaced tough vegetable cordage peculiar to the Tropics, coming right across my face or breast, and barring the way as effectually as ropes. Fortunately I had a large spring knife which enabled me to extricate myself, but at length I found that I had got into a gully, as now and then a large rock down which I scrambled had a few drops of water stealing along its base, and to see any way but right upwards was impossible, so dense was the foliage. The summit, however, now far above me, seemed quite unattainable again, whilst I was incessantly stopped by serious difficulties, one of which, that of sliding down a smooth rock six or seven feet in depth, upon a rock equally smooth, where one turn of the ankle would have been a death-warrant, was not the least. I was evidently far from any track—down in a deep water-course—at present almost dry, surrounded by impenetrable thickets, fifteen or twenty feet high, and I began to feel a little embarrassed. The fervent noon-day sun of the Tropics was playing upon me even here, and besides a stiff walk of four miles from Mrs.



K——'s, I had eaten nothing since seven o'clock. To get further down, even if practicable, would take me at least many hours ; to ascend, appeared quite impossible ; and to remain where I was, and where nobody could reasonably be expected to search for me, in an obscure gully of the mountain, would be the height of folly. I was literally fainting with exhaustion, having been often thrown down by the cordage as I rushed panting on. I scrambled up a bit, but only once again despondingly to descend to my old station. Then, after resting a while, I resumed my course downward, slowly and despondingly, absolutely fighting my way through the innumerable obstacles—scrambling for my very life. I shouted at the top of my voice for assistance ; but who was there to hear me ? A blood-hound indeed might have traced me, but nothing else could. At last, exhausted and fainting, I came to some bamboos, then I got into a thicket of roseaux, fifteen or twenty feet high, growing closely together in deep grass, three feet in height, stealing up the precipitous sides of an almost vertical hill, on one spur of which I saw a large tree. For this I shaped my course, but breaking one's way through a thicket of dry roseaux is only to be understood by tropical travellers.

When I got near the tree I found it so interlaced by pendant cordage, that it defied all my efforts to reach it. I succeeded, however, in gaining a view of the water-course from which I had emerged and part of the valley through which it led, and of the sea-shore three or four miles beyond ; but to go down again I

saw would never do. The roseaux were now all below me, and above me huge tufts of guinea-grass or something like it, clothed the side of the steep. I could not conjecture to what place it could lead. The lofty, bushy, tropical shrubs were scarcer, yet so steep was the ascent that I could only ascend by tugging at the roots of the grassy tufts, and hauling myself up by them. This was hard work, but at length I espied a bread-fruit tree, and then another—signs once more of the hand of man. Then I suddenly stepped on a narrow footpath and I was safe. Whither the path led, or how much more fatigue I must encounter before I reached Mrs. K——'s house, I could not divine; for the valley around was quite strange to me. A walk of a mile downwards brought me to a mountain stream, from which the path on the other side led upwards over another hill. This I followed until I came to some negro grounds, where cultivation had destroyed the track evidently used only by those persons quite familiar with the locality. I called to a negress far above me at work on her grounds; she came down, and gave me a draught of water from her calabash—I was so exhausted with the incessant climbing that I could scarcely put one foot before the other.

I next encountered an old man, the watchman of the Spring Estate, on which it appeared I now was; and he walked with me to a track which led as he said to the Marriaqua Valley, from which, as it turned out, I had wandered far, though in what way is to this moment a mystery to me. I had a long, hot, tiring walk

up to the ridge of a mountain, whence I recognised the mountains of the Marriaqua; and from this spot a walk of a mile and a half brought me, at four o'clock P.M., bruised, lacerated, and utterly knocked up, to the house of Mrs. Kirby. In the scramble my handkerchief had been forced out of my pocket and lost, the ribband of my sketch-book was torn off, and my pockets were filled with leaves of trees. The skin was knocked off my ankles, and my hands and legs severely scratched by thorns. Instead of having been gone one hour as I proposed, I had been for five hours incessantly walking, and had ascended and descended two mountains each a thousand feet high; so I was quite ready to enjoy the liberal hospitality of my new acquaintance.

Nothing could exceed the courtesy and sympathy expressed by Mrs. Kirby and her family; they had been watching for me through a telescope, and when they found that I did not return at the expected time, she pronounced that I had been lost in the bush. For myself, I could not but feel grateful to the Almighty Controller of events for my happy escape.

The soil of the Marriaqua Valley is very rich, and few holders will sell land here at all. If they do, they demand one hundred pounds sterling an acre for it. They are about establishing a village, though at present it consists only of a few houses. It is to be called Mesopotamia, and is the only instance in St. Vincent of any internal attempt at improvement, the other five villages being on the sea-shore. The

lots will be rented or leased, not sold. There is an Episcopal chapel here.

Mrs. K—— has eight families of Portuguese on the estate who, however, are not satisfied. “They are very difficult to deal with,” said Mr. T—— to me; “but the negroes are worse.” In some places, the Portuguese complain that the negroes, with their characteristic baboonism, tease and insult, and otherwise ill-treat them. The negro is just becoming alive to the consequences of a white labouring population being introduced as likely to prevent his anticipated monopoly of the soil; and I believe it is the only plan that will save these colonies from ruin, and from being subjected to a race fit only, like the horse and ass, to be in servitude.

I took leave of my friends in the valley; and returned home by the Vigie road, accompanied by Mr. T—— to the top of the ridge. On the way, I killed a congo snake, four feet six and a half inches in length. My little guide, Patrick, was terribly frightened at it, and even when *in extremis* from the blows of my stalwart supple-jack, gave “de congo” a wide berth. I took it home on my stick. The reptile was heavy enough to make my arm ache, and whenever a negro woman or lad came in sight, there was a regular scramble into the bush or hedge, with an “Oh, good Lard!” Their fear of this perfectly harmless snake was altogether ludicrous. Even my sable esquire mustered up a faint smile at it, and when it was *very* dead, volunteered to carry it to Mount Agiouti, “Me

carry de congo, Misser Day." These snakes are of a light greyish colour, beautifully marked with black. They feed on rats and lizards, and are very serviceable to the planter. The smell from the carcase was extremely disagreeable.

Good cane land in St. Vincent, with young plants, will average two hogsheds and a half of sugar per acre for the first three or four years. The Waterloo Estate to windward were even expected to yield four and a half hogsheds an acre; but for anything like this there must be no sparing of manure. Bone manure is brought from England, and guano has been introduced. Good compost is also valuable, but hitherto no means have been taken to preserve the material that might form it on the island. Indeed, so supine are the people, that the cultivation of the sugar-cane is quite empirical. A good agricultural chemist like Liebig, would be invaluable, that is if the shabby Scotch carls who predominate here would pay him.

Almost as a matter of course, the West Indies have become extremely democratic.

Kingston is full of crazy negroes, their at best addled brains being fairly overturned by intoxicating liquids. These poor wretches create a smile when seen for the first time; but when the novelty is over, they become serious nuisances, interrupting the peace and quietness of the town. The blacks are a very drunken race, often indeed scarcely able to speak from intoxication so early as eight o'clock in the morning. They are also extremely proud and quarrelsome, and treache-

rous to each other, so that, although they do not love the whites, they have much more confidence in them than in their own race.

On the 19th of April, at five o'clock P.M., I left St. Vincent for Carriacou, about forty miles distant, one of the Granadines—a line of small islands extending from St. Vincent to Granada. Our vessel was a sloop that registered nine tons, but carried at least fifteen. Save one mulatto all the crew were negroes; and all indiscriminately spoke Spanish, French, and English. I do not believe, however, that one of them was a really British-born negro.

I arrived at Carriacou on Sunday at three o'clock A.M. The galaxy was extremely bright; but I could not see “the glorious emblem of our faith,” the southern cross, which Coleridge so eulogises from St. Lucia. I was more fortunate the next evening, when it was pointed out to me about ten degrees above the horizon.

I called on Mr. G. M—— at Beau Séjour, to whom I had a letter, and who very politely invited me to stay with him, which I did for two days. At the expiration of that time, feeling myself *de trop*, I went down to the little town or village of Hillsborough, the capital of Carriacou.

Carriacou is nine miles long, and from two to three miles broad. It has about four thousand inhabitants, and there are nine sugar estates in cultivation. Formerly much cotton was grown here, but now east, north, and south have driven the west out of the market, as cotton is only worth twenty shillings a hundred weight. Although since the emancipation

the population has almost doubled, Carriacou is not a thriving place. Most of the labouring people go off to Trinidad for the crop season, returning to the Granadines at the expiration of that time, which makes labour scarce and dear.

Carriacou boasts of several conical mountains a thousand feet in height, which, though neither solemn nor magnificent, are romantic and pretty.


Out of the very best houses, the West Indies is an uncomfortable place. Go where one will, one never finds a chest of drawers or a press in one's room, and the necessity of unpacking and packing a large trunk, and disarranging everything whenever the smallest matter is wanted, or the alternative of having any little article "annexed," by allowing it lie about, is only to be understood by those who have tried it. To have a table-spoon given you to eat an egg with is very common.

At Carriacou I got a policeman to cut my hair. Barbadoes can boast two hair-dressers: one of them a loquacious cockney, a sort of London Figaro. In St. Vincent there is neither hair-dresser nor barber, the officiating *snip-cheveux* being by trade a cooper. A dozen English journeymen hair-dressers, if they could get out here, would gain a comfortable livelihood, by shaving, hair-cutting and dressing, selling soaps, perfumery, and good razors. Any one going to the West Indies must make up his mind to rough it a good deal, as amongst the working classes living is so easy, there is scarcely any stimulus to exertion.

I went to see the wonder of Carriacou, which is the *carénage* of a lagoon, about three miles from the town, where there is a colony of oysters adhering to the mangrove bushes. Our route lay along the sand of the sea-shore, perforated in all directions with crab-holes, dangerous enough for the horses. We crossed the island to the lovely bay of Belfont. Oh ! so calm, so beautiful, it looked a perfect paradise. The house of Mademoiselle Belfont is high up on a hill, commanding a view quite enchanting. Below is an archipelago of exquisite little islands, set in a sea so lovely, that no dream of fairy-land could come near it—a purple *mare*, variegated with spaces of the lightest, brightest emerald-green, a fit abode for nereids or mermaids. These light spots were in reality reefs and shoals.

Beyond all this, in the distance, lay lofty Granada. Immediately around and in front were steep conical hills, of boldest form and brightest green, shooting up with startling abruptness. In the plain beneath, avenues of cocoa-nuts stretched along, and further on lay the sea, fringed with dazzling white sand.

To do the French coloured or mulatto tribes justice, I must say that in courtesy they far outdo the English of the same class. Our kind entertainers seemed bent on doing all in their power to amuse us. After a collation of ground nuts, which they even took the trouble to shell for us, and a huge orange of Granada, as large as three of those of Europe, but very flavourless, the grand treasure of the house was dis-



played for our entertainment, being ushered in with due solemnity, by carefully removing its various coverings. This was neither more nor less than a huge London barrel organ, of ancient date, standing five feet high, and having six stops and thirteen barrels, each playing ten tunes. Gentle reader, disciple of Mozart, Handel or Rossini, do but fancy one hundred and thirteen tunes on a barrel organ! One was, *par excellence*, the English barrel, and we were favoured in horrible, never-ending succession with "In my cottage near a wood," "Life let us cherish," "I'll weave a gay garland," "Shove her up," "Moll in the wad," and various other popular airs, winding up, in compliment to me as an Englishman, with "God save the Queen," set in a most querelous manner, all quivers and quavers, and then "Rule Britannia." Then came an Irish barrel, with all the lilt, gigs, and delectable *morceaux* of Donnybrook Fair; followed by a Scotch barrel, droning strathspeys, flings, and reels. Then we had French popular airs, of the *Marché au Blé* school, followed by a *modern* English barrel, with "Nix my Dolly," "Sich a gitting up stairs," the Cachoucha and Cracovienne, until intuitively my memory reverted to "Forse un di conoscerete." Now and then, indeed, I stole a glance out of the open door at the lovely scenery around me, when "Per valle, per boschi" would intrude. Even "How cheerful along the gay mead" made me more impatient for silence. But no, for nearly three mortal hours did the organ grind on, sometimes squealing, sometimes squeaking. One lady relieved the other in

never-tiring courtesy ; there was no cessation. Politeness compelled us to listen, nay more, even to give the expected mead of praise, to what was evidently their great groundwork for fame. “C’est bien jolie cette orgue-là ; j’aime beaucoup la musique.” So I did, but not exactly music of the character which we were now listening to ; but who could be churl enough not to reward, in the only way that we were able, the kind endeavours of these amiable but simple persons, to entertain us ?

In addition to the organ, there was connected with it a tambourine-drum and a triangle, which struck every three notes. The jingle, thump and grind, was in truth almost beyond endurance.

I rode to the Careenage, a narrow, serpentine lagoon of sea water, bordered with mangrove bushes, to the pendant branches of which, as they dip in the water, the oysters adhere. We rowed round the lagoon in a boat.

The mangrove bush may grow ten or twelve feet high. The upper part bears star-like clusters of bright green leaves, very like the leaf of the laurel, but the lower branches are quite bare of foliage, and bend down to the water, forming long pendants, to which the dark oysters adhere, giving to a superficial observer the idea of the lower branches blossoming. Some of the shells of these oysters are white, and all are so exceedingly small and curiously enveloped, that a stranger, if left to himself, could never guess what they were. Many of the branches of the mangrove are tri-furcated or even qua-

drupled. As the tide was low, we heard a continuous crackling, caused by the oysters splitting open from the heat of the sun. The residents are continually obliged to cut the mangrove branches close, to prevent their taking root in the water, and so choking up the passage. The water in this narrow armlet of the sea is extremely deep, but there are nice little sandy bays, at the entrance, in which small craft can be hove down. A sloop of nine or ten tons was at the moment being overhauled. The scepticism of the old woman as to "oysters growing on trees," would have been completely removed by a visit to the lagoon.

In returning I saw a tamarind tree in full bearing. It is a large and noble tree. So powerful is the acid of its fruit, that until preserved, it is absolutely uneatable. I also observed the clove tree and the pomegranate bush. The astringent fruit of the latter, with which I was surfeited at Constantinople, was now nearly ripe. The sandy roads were lined with the poetical acacia, with its tiny leaves and white thorns, two inches long.

Carriacou boasts the usual complement of religious edifices, Episcopal, Wesleyan, and Roman Catholic, which latter persuasion the greater part of the inhabitants, who are French creoles, profess; creolé' French is also the prevailing tongue.

CHAPTER IX.

GRANADA—ST. GEORGE'S—DEPARTURE FROM GRANADA—THE
BOCCAS—GULF OF PARIA—TRINIDAD—PORT OF SPAIN—CLIMATE
—HILL COOLIES—THE ICE-HOUSE—MARKET—FIRE-FLIES—IN-
HOSPITALITY OF THE POPULATION.

I LEFT Carriacou, after a stay of several days, in the 'Osprey,' a drogher of twenty tons, for Granada, which is about forty miles distant. We passed several large keys or islands, some of which are kept as stock farms. Their greatest drawback is, they are limited to rain-water, as there are neither rivers nor springs in these Granadines, only large tanks, which of course run the risk of being exhausted. Stock, however, are only allowed to drink once a day, and from habit this suffices.

Kicking Jenny, *alias* Miss Jenny, a lofty dome-like rock, receives this *soubriquet* from a tremendous current that rushes, either to windward or to leeward, as the case may be, through the narrow channels between these "keys," and rarely fails to make small

vessels plunge bows under, or to give passengers a thorough drenching, which was amply bestowed on us.

Granada being very lofty, is almost always visible from Carriacou ; but as we drew near, the high, dusky mountains revealed themselves in great beauty: the lower parts cultivated in canes, each secluded valley having its white sugar-works, and hive-like negro village. We passed in succession Le Cane and Grand Pauvre, and then Le Gouyave, an exquisitely situated village, having a church, with avenues of cocoa-nut trees, and groves of gru-gru palms, surrounded by high basaltic knolls, backed in their turn by lofty green mountains. Indeed, you have only to fancy the loveliest mountains of Perthshire transported to the fervid clime of the Tropics, and to substitute cocoa palms for pines and larches, and forests for granite peaks, to realize how exquisite this scenery must be. We next caught sight of Grand Rio, with its basaltic columns, and arrived at Le Carénage (the port of St. George's) by half past seven P.M. I soon landed, and took up my residence at the boarding-house of Mrs. Kennedy.

St. George's, the capital of Granada, may fairly be called the City of Steeps. I thought Valetta, in Malta, from "Nix Mangiare" Stairs upwards, bad enough in this way, and Boston, in Massachusetts, can boast of some pretty slopes, but St. George's eclipses them all. Half the streets seem to rival Les Montagnes Russes; and were frost or snow known

here, a life insurance company would require a hundred and fifty per cent. for the risk of living in such a mountainous town. The streets are paved with small hobbling pebbles, which, *malgré lui*, make a pedestrian mince his steps, like a dancing-master troubled with corns. The hollow of Market Square, to which these steeps so abruptly descends, seems to be sunk into a bowl, so stifling and suffocating is it after the boisterous flurries of wind, to which the upper streets are subject.

Whatever it may have once been, St. George's is at present a miserably poor place, into such ruin has the emancipation of the negroes plunged this fine island ! Estates are abandoned for the negro to fatten on, and he treats the white as if the island were already his own.

The view from St. George's is very inferior to that from the capital of St. Vincent, although from the sea, the Granadian city, rising like an amphitheatre, has rather a pretty effect. Though probably higher, the mountains are more extended, and by no means so bold as those which back Kingston. Granada has a fine port, and in consequence is the *point d'appui* of the steamers, and indeed of every other craft for every possible port in the West Indies.

From Fort Richmond, the finely situated garrison of St. George's, it is said that, on a clear day, Tobago, Trinidad, and the Spanish main are visible. Granada is a very rainy place. Oddly enough, everybody seems

to speak as well of Trinidad, as they do ill of Barbadoes.

I made but a short stay at Granada, and on Tuesday, April 27th, at half-past one P.M., started for Trinidad in the 'Carolina,' a Spanish launch of Augustura. This was a very fine looking vessel, of about forty tons, but proved to be a very slow coach, and so leaky, that the pumps were incessantly kept going, notwithstanding which, the luggage of some of the passengers was seen floating about in the hold, the contents of one unhappy portmanteau being thoroughly saturated with sea-water. Fortunately, mine escaped, or the consequences would have been most disastrous to my papers and manifold sketch-books.

As seen from the sea, St. George's is a dingy looking place. The town rises conically, after the most approved Greek arrangement, but the gay stuccoes of Italy and the Levant are wanting to give it brightness. The people are, as a mass, ignorant, stupid, and tasteless; and though St. George's is full of grog-shops, I do not believe that there is one bookseller in the town. Every shop sells a little of everything.

In consequence of the south-easterly current, which rushes out of the river Orinoco, we had to keep up as high as possible, to prevent being swept away to leeward of Trinidad. These launches, which bring cattle from the Spanish main, are very flat bottomed, so that having no hold of the water, they go to leeward like feathers; besides which we were flying light,

and it turned out to be well for us that it was so, for had we been deep, our leak would in all probability have sent us down. Our crew were Peons (a mongrel race, half Indians, half Spanish Americans): the Padrone was a short, sturdy lad of twenty. Indeed, all were mere boys, but each carried an enormous *cuchillo*, or knife. Their food was tasso (*tasajo*), beef cut into strips and dried in the sun, the most abominable cag-mag in appearance that could be imagined. This black horseflesh-looking stuff was roasted, and pronounced by some of our French negroes on board to be *muy bueno*, *très bon*, first rate. The smell, however, was sickening, much like that of stale meat in the dog-days. All the crew were very civil.

At daylight we sighted Trinidad, the Spanish main looming like a lofty island, and by eight o'clock A.M., arrived at the second bocca, De Huevos. Here we encountered a tremendous tide rushing out of the Gulf of Paria, dead against us. These boccas, or mouths, of which there are four, are merely channels between three islands, which form one side of the gulf, and being under the lee of the land, generally intercept the trade wind, so that ships, being becalmed, cannot stem the current when it is contrary; and even when fairly through, they are often swept out again, and baffled for hours, and even days.

We went through the channel, which is half a mile in width, in company with a beautiful little brig, the 'Clara,' of Philadelphia, a splendid sailor; but for an

hour neither of us gained an inch, and occasionally both went astern. This second boccas was scarcely a mile through, but though favoured now and then with a flurry of wind, we did not effect a passage until eleven o'clock in the forenoon. On either side, the hills may be a thousand feet in height, and are clothed with trees to their summits. The water is very bold, but judging from the descriptions of various travellers, the boccas and their scenery have been greatly over-rated. Indeed, every thing depends on what a traveller has previously seen; and I can imagine those who set off for the first time from England, and who on their way only see the picturesque Island of Barbadoes, being enchanted with the views of the lofty islands near Trinidad, though they do not appear particularly grand to those who are acquainted with Italy and the Levant.


We got through at last, and found ourselves in the Gulf of Paria; and although Port of Spain, the capital, is said only to be ten or twelve miles from the Boccas, we did not beat up to our anchorage off the city until eight o'clock in the evening.

With the coast of Trinidad I confess that I was disappointed. I had heard so much of it that I concluded it would far outdo all my previous experience. It is, however, not more picturesque than Granada, and therefore inferior to the leeward coast of St. Vincent. The mountains are not conical and isolated, as I expected they would be, but run in long ridges, and most of them may be termed camel-backed. They are

lofty, certainly ; but in consequence of their forms, their real height is not apparent, whilst their coat of trees tame them down very much, and the dark unvarying green tint softens them still more. Here and there a peak or two showed itself, and a picturesque "bit" might be selected, but nothing of which to make a picture. The mountains of Cumana, in Venezuela, on the Spanish Main, are far loftier (five thousand feet), and the clouds which did not even kiss the brows of the Trinidad mountains, descended half-way down those of the continent, which by the way, did not, from the boccas, a distance of twenty miles, look at all like a continent, but only like a magnificent island.

The water was bright green in the Gulf of Paria ; the sea was dark green ; although the description of some traveller, quoted in Osborn's Guide-book, speaks of purest ultramarine, a colour which previously I had always imagined to be blue. "Is the water always this colour?" I inquired of our Granadian pilot. "Always, Sir ; it never changes," was the response. As we neared the city, the sea resembled in colour that of the Isle of Wight Channel, and off Port of Spain it was of a dull milky-green or drab, and extremely turbid, as well as shallow.

Of the four boccas, the one nearest the city (del Monos) being exceedingly narrow, is only for very small craft, which in case of accident can use their sweeps. The second, Bocca de Huevos, through which we came, is for brigs and small vessels. Then comes



the Bocca de Navios ; and lastly the Bocca Grande, five miles wide, for men-of-war, or other heavy ships.

I arrived at Mrs. Peterson's boarding-house by nine o'clock at night, thoroughly tired of being knocked about for thirty-two hours to make only ninety miles, nine of which had occupied us twelve hours, the current as well as the trade wind being generally against a vessel getting up to Port of Spain. We had slept on deck, stretched on our cloaks, as there was no cabin worth mentioning.

I determined never to go in a cattle ship again, as the decks were extremely slippery from the grease, and the bulwarks very low, so that, as she heeled over, the greatest caution was necessary to avoid sliding overboard to leeward, with a dozen sharks to catch you—a common accident to landmen in such small craft in the West Indies.

Port of Spain has a very foreign air ; feluccas, canoes, and other odd-looking craft skim about ; whilst Indians, Spanish Americans, French, English, Bengal coolies, Scotch, and negroes, from all sorts of places, speaking all sorts of tongues, are good materials for making one feel far a-field. Even to a somewhat experienced traveller like myself, South America, so close, began to savour of the Pacific, and I almost felt inclined to go over to Otaheite. One has only to cross the Isthmus of Darien, and then—*only* to go a little further.

For this rude part of the world, Port of Spain might,

by straining a point, be called a fine, as it certainly is a regular, city. The streets are broad, and at right angles with each other, following the leading points of the compass. In the centre of two of them, King's Wharf Street and Marine Square, are long avenues planted with trees, under which, however, no one seems to walk. The houses, which are ugly enough, are long and low, having latticed wooden galleries in front, and are often entered through a large, heavy, wooden gate, daubed brick-dust colour, leading into a shabby courtyard, usually redolent of every sort of filth, sweltering and fermenting, and emitting a sickening combination of foul smells, which often has the effect of making people ill.

The leading character of Port of Spain is decidedly Spanish. The greater part of the community are Roman Catholic, and, for a colonial building, the unfinished Catholic cathedral may be called a good edifice. It is built of yellow brick, partially stuccoed, but will not bear the most remote comparison with the Catholic cathedrals of Europe. In these colonies, architecture is in a very low state, and all sorts of preposterous arrangements in building astonish the stranger; un-comfortableness predominates, and the most palpable want of judgment makes him wonder whether the skull of the contriver was not filled with mortar instead of brains.

There is an Episcopal church here of some pretensions. From the jetty to the extremity of the city, north, may be a mile; and the city is less than half

that distance in breadth. The streets are kept very clean, and a species of buzzard, or carrion vulture, erroneously called Corbo, or crow, are the authorised scavengers. These birds, which are black, and as large as young turkeys, have long gawky legs, keen eyes, and an iron-grey cowl covering their necks, which gives them a ludicrous resemblance to barristers in costume. They are knowing fellows too, and fight as keenly for their offal as any gentleman of the bar can do for his fee. It is very droll to see them in the morning, after a night's dew or rain, sitting in rows on the house tops, spreading out their wings to dry.

The wharfs of Port of Spain are good, although the water is not above three feet deep. There is a wooden jetty, and hard by a small lighthouse, doing all honour and glory to the powers that be, as the former inscription, whatever it might have been, has been erased, and [V] [R] MDCCCXLI, carefully inserted in its place.

Standing at the extremity of the jetty, the view is not a particularly interesting one. The mountains at the back of the town are not from this distance very picturesque in their forms, whilst seaward, to the east, there stretches out towards San Fernando a long line of coast as flat as the fens of Lincolnshire. Westward are the boccas, at this distance by no means fine, whilst the Spanish Main looks like a cloud, and from its height (five thousand feet) is often obscured altogether. Seldom indeed have I been more disappointed than in this scenery, after the exaggerated descriptions

that I had read of Trinidad, as given by travellers who probably had previously seen but little, and whose ideas of mountains were limited to the Hampstead and Highgate hills.

French and Spanish mulattoes abound here, and almost every white native of Great Britain will turn out to be a Scotchman, vulgar, coarse, ignorant and dogmatical. The horrible twang of "Glaskie" and Ayr, and of Dumfriesshire predominates, and the refuse of all Scotland seems to have found its way to the West Indies, cottars in rank, and shopmen in mind. Indeed, excepting always the military, a gentleman is a *rara avis* in these colonies.

I went to see the barracks, a mile and a half from the town. They are very spacious, but, being in a savannah, in the wet season the site must be a mere swamp. The officers' quarters are very good. The most characteristic objects, as seen from here, were clumps of dark green crackling bamboos, and near the road the tall twisted poles of the Torch-thistle, one of the varieties of the cactus tribe,* often forty feet in height. The surrounding country was rather pretty, but wanted the tropical character of Granada, or St. Vincent.

On the night of the 3rd of May we had an earthquake, but it was "no great *shakes*," though I felt the bed quiver under me twice very distinctly, whilst all the dogs in the city began to bark, an invariable result.

* *Cactus Peruviana*, or *Cylindricus*.

Indeed, they say here that the commotion amongst the lower animals is always very great—cows low, horses caper about, mules make a noise, cocks crow, turkeys gobble, and there is a general uneasiness throughout the farm-yard. Certes, the people also were very much frightened. The shock was not stronger than would be made by a heavy waggon bumping over the rough stones of London; still it could not be mistaken, though the natives and long-residents are much more sensible of these shocks than a stranger. A very observant gentleman in Bequia told me that he could always predict a shock: that when the weather was very sultry and oppressive, and a cold blast of air came very suddenly, an earthquake was sure to follow, after which the sultriness returned as before. Voltaire, in his tragedy of Mahomet alludes to the same fact.

Port of Spain is an extremely expensive place to live in. There is no sufficient reason for this, as it is but one night's sail from Barbadoes; yet that which can be had for fifty cents in Barbadoes, costs a dollar in Trinidad, notwithstanding that the soil is more productive in the latter island. House rent, too, is extravagantly high. For the upper part of a house in Port of Spain, consisting of two good rooms, partitioned into four mere closets, and unfurnished, sixty pounds a year was demanded, and considered reasonable. An iced punch that costs sixpence in Barbadoes, is priced at a shilling in Trinidad. English copper coin will be refused by the negroes, a silver stampee

(penny farthing) being the lowest coin that will be taken. Indeed, for a British colony, the monetary system of Trinidad is most disgraceful. An English sixpence will only pass for a bit (fivepence here), and a shilling for a franc. This leads to all sorts of frauds upon strangers. Surely the money should be made exclusively British. If any coin at all depreciates in an English colony, it ought surely to be foreign, and not British.

Though natural enough so near the Equator, there is one thing that cannot fail to attract the attention of a new-comer. It is that at noon a man seems to be trampling on his own shadow, so literally is it under his feet; and if you want to look at the sun, you must bend your head back, and turn your face to look vertically above your head. Trinidad is only ten degrees from the line, and although only about two hundred miles south of St. Vincent, the increase of heat is astonishing. There is generally, however, a fine, fresh, easterly breeze blowing, not fraught with rheumatism as in England, but most agreeable and refreshing.

The most curious members of this mixed population, are, perhaps, the hill coolies from Madras and Calcutta. They walk about the streets, accompanied by their women and wretched little progeny, who look more like attenuated monkeys than children. The dress, what there is of it, is extremely picturesque; but, in truth, some of them are costumed in as free and easy a style as the Camanche Indian, who, in the

streets of Washington, finding the heat too great for him, coolly took off the unmentionables, which civilization had compelled him to adopt, and paraded the streets pretty nearly *in nudibus*, much to the affected horror of that most decorous but indelicate community. These coolies are quite as picturesque as any North American Indians. To these Easterns, living is so easy here, that many of them will not work, but saunter about, catching game and feeding on plantains.

Although the days are hot, the evenings in Trinidad are delightfully cool and pleasant; whilst as a promenade at sunset, the wooden jetty of Port of Spain even boasts a most refreshing breeze, being so far quite unlike the summers of Baltimore, or of New York, where at eleven o'clock at night, and five o'clock in the morning, the thermometer will stand at 86° Fahr., and that, too, close to an open window looking north.

There is no harbour at Port of Spain, only an open roadstead; but as the shipping lie well under the weather-shore of the low lands, stretching along the Caroni Savannah, as long as the trade or easterly wind blows, there is merely a ripple on the sea, which, by the way, is very shallow. Latteen sailed feluccas from the Spanish Main are common. They are, however, much more clumsy than those of the Mediterranean. Canoes, managed with paddles instead of oars, are spooned about in all directions.

Besides the Asiatic coolies, there are a good many Portuguese emigrants; but it appears that as soon as

they have fulfilled their engagements, and have saved a little money, they forsake field labour, so that the only solid good they do, is to prevent the predominance of the negro labourer.

City as it would wish to seem, Port of Spain, until lately, had no barber. At present there are two, both Portuguese immigrants. A regular ladies hair-dresser, with all the implements of his craft—wigs, false hair, &c.—is still wanting, and a good one would make a fortune. In truth, with all the attempts at style, Port of Spain is a beggarly place. Omitting the item of convicts, society here reminds me of what I have read of Sydney, in New South Wales. The French shopkeepers, however, seem to be of rather a higher class than the British.

At night, Port of Spain is a miserably dark, dull place. The stores close at five o'clock in the afternoon, and an hour after, the streets are comparatively deserted. The few merchants and shopkeepers go to dinner, and so night closes in. The streets are not lighted, so that all is as dark as Erebus; nor is there any place of public amusement—no theatres, concerts, or *cafés*, none of the diversified modes of spending an hour open to a stranger in Europe. The Ice-house is a sort of exception, a superior sort of liqueur-shop, where iced punch is retailed at a shilling a glass. One stationer's shop, as a circulating library, boasts of a small stock of trashy, sentimental, Leadenhall novels, but not one work that can improve the mind, or increase our knowledge, whilst

in the day, all is flour-barrels, staves, salt-fish, and butter-firkins. Either through ignorance of what is customary elsewhere, or from overwhelming selfishness, the inhabitants are not attentive to strangers, however well introduced.

An iron steamer, the *Lady McLeod*, plies five times a week between Port of Spain, San Fernando, and La Brae. She is a pretty little craft, but her lower half is painted bright scarlet, whilst the upper part rejoices in bright green, so that literally she is as spruce as a scraped carrot. So much for colonial taste.

Amongst the infinity of monstrous exaggerations that I had heard previously to my visit to Trinidad, one was, that there was a splendid fruit market here; so one of my first visits was to see this mart of Pomona, which was to cast our poor Covent Garden into the shade; and my surprise was great to find in an open piece of ground, a few negro women squatted here and there *longo intervallo*, with a bunch of bananas or plantains, a sour-sop, or a few grenadillas, or some such trifle, spread on a dirty rag placed on the ground. On expressing my astonishment, the observation was, "Lord, there's no fruit worth speaking about to be had here: fruit is scarcely cultivated, as nobody cares about it." This I found to be the case, as every addition to my experience satisfied me of the vast inferiority of the fruits here generally to those of Europe, pine-apples always excepted. The sappa-dillo is like a rotten pear, sweet enough, like many

others, but of very poor flavour. The oranges have skins as coarse and thick as a boar's hide, and are very inferior to those of St. Michael or Sicily, or those most delicious of all, the tiny oranges of Oporto, with skins almost as thin as writing paper. Here the people seem affronted if you don't pronounce those of the place to be the finest you have ever eaten, because, say they, sagaciously, "oranges don't grow in England."

On a subsequent visit to the market, I noticed tolerable cabbages, carrots, spinach, cabbage-lettuces, parsley, onions, and turnip-radishes, consequently, one gets a salad now and then—a refreshing mixture in a hot climate that I never saw in Barbadoes or St. Vincent.

To any one who could labour with his own hands in the broiling sun, uncleared land in Trinidad is cheap, and "lots" are advertised to be sold as low even as fifteen dollars (three pounds); but if a gentleman were to take a piece of land, to be dependent on the labour of others to improve it, he would find it dear enough, labour of all sorts being so high. Field labourers, even coolies, get four bits (one shilling and eightpence) a day, whilst artisans and street labourers are paid in proportion, when you can get them so far to favour you as to work at all. More than once have I heard a carman say to his employer since no labourer of this class will receive weekly or monthly wages, "Massa, I no work for you no more to-day!" and have watched the poor employer *soliciting* the

independent negro in this style, "Come, now, my good fellow, you *must* take another turn or two; remember how many dollars you have already received from me to-day. Come, there's a good fellow, *do*." "Well, den, massa, if I do, you mos pay me higher."* With these consequences staring him in the face, he must be a bold man indeed who would take unimproved land in Trinidad. "Here," said a lady to me, "it is the white who is the slave to the black," and so it was.

While I was at Trinidad the ship, 'Duke of Bedford,' arrived from Calcutta with three hundred coolies, the greater part of the men being naked, save for the indispensable dhooty round their loins. At first sight they seemed to be slight and effeminate in figure, but a closer examination showed them to be well knit. The women had their faces uncovered. It was amusing on their landing to watch the brutal, stupid negro laughing at them and their scanty costumes; but the measure is a good one, as the coolies are decidedly a race far higher in intellect than the hideously-visaged African. Indeed, nothing can well be more striking than the sharp-featured, keen-eyed, intelligent physiognomy of the Asiatic in juxtaposition with those of the negro. It is not so much what the coolies are at present as what they will become in two or three generations, when circumstances shall have modified their religious prejudices and their children shall be Christianised,

* I put this conversation down verbatim as I heard it on one occasion, but it was often repeated in substance by others.

and when the pride of caste shall no longer prevent them from finding their level in the social scale. Both cooly and negro are equally dark, but besides



COOLY.



NEGRO.

the difference of feature, the wide distinction of voice and tongue evince the superiority of the Asiatic.

The dislike of the negroes in Trinidad to the introduction of the emigrants from either India or Madeira is very great, and they take every opportunity to insult and deride the new-comers. The way in which the Portuguese work compared with themselves, shames the negroes; and they fear the consequences, foreseeing that they will have to work as they never yet did; and it shows them also that the country is not so exclusively their own as they fondly hoped it would be, there is no doubt of the policy of the coloured demagogues, by whom blackee is led, in desiring to oust the whites altogether, and make the West Indies their own.

The Tropics can only be seen by strangers at a great amount of personal discomfort. Everything is coarse, clumsy, and inconvenient, arising from the inhabitants being either ignorant creoles or low-caste Europeans—the British of all three kingdoms in particular—backed by a semi-barbarous negro population. There is a vast amount of outside show, but pride and vulgarity go together amongst all classes. Even in Trinidad, warm as it is, there is not such a thing as a warm bath to be had, and indeed the very mention by me of such a want was met with a shout of ridicule, “A warm bath in the West Indies! why *we* want to keep cool, therefore *we* take the *cold* bath,”—this is a fair specimen of the sort of knowledge which these people possess, and their mode of reasoning.

In tropical countries few things are more interesting than the infinity of fire-flies that flit about in the neighbourhood of solemn groves at night. The light is not continuous as in our glow-worms, but there are two bright scintillations which follow each other with extreme rapidity, and then the insect *goes out* for a dozen seconds or so, after which it rekindles. Whilst it does last, the light is sufficiently powerful to illuminate the ground or the back of any tree when either are sufficiently near. These flies are seen in great perfection in Trinidad, and I have traced a person clothed in white, traversing the gloomy depths of a dense grove, perfectly well by their light.

Amongst the most beautiful things that I saw in Trinidad are what in India would be called nullahs

—the almost dry beds of rivers, overshadowed by clusters of dark green bamboos, which meet on either side, and certainly form the most exquisite yet characteristic shade of the Tropics. Down the centre of these nullahs meanders a small stream, not larger than a ditch, the dry bed being thickly strewn with withered leaves. The whole forms a lovely leafy glen, cool and sequestered, giving, through the most exquisite light and shade, glimpses of the dreamy mountains beyond. But then, to come pounce upon a bevy of negro washwomen gabbling, thumping, and slapping the dirty linen upon a rough piece of rock, puts at once all one's romance to flight.

West Indian towns are most disagreeable places, and the only way that the delightful climate (for in spite of the heat, it *is* delightful) or the exquisite tropical scenery can be enjoyed is in the country, where one is free from filth, bad smells, and wrangling. If the owner of an estate be originally habituated to the decencies of life (which few of them are), he can surround himself with almost all the comforts of civilization, or at least can neutralise most of the annoyances resulting from African barbarism.

I do not think the Trinidadians an unkind people, though they are overwhelmingly selfish, and neglect to proffer to a stranger those attentions usual in civilized communities. Out of four letters of introduction to civilians—considered here persons perfectly respectable—only one of them invited me to his house, or introduced me to its mistress, with whom I sat an hour,

and there it ended. The military alone (the 19th regiment) did what was usual, and in their society I spent the few agreeable hours that I passed in Trinidad. I think that the current idea in England of West Indian hospitality should be corrected as soon as possible, as the truth will prevent great disappointment. On discussing this subject with a French gentleman, who had spent a considerable time in Port of Spain, he said : "No ! strangers are never invited to the houses of those to whom they bring letters ; if a stranger 'do business' to the amount of four or five hundred dollars with a merchant, he will most likely be invited to take a glass of sangaree at the counting-house, but, however respectable, will never be introduced to the private circles of the man of business unless perchance he be a Scotsman ! There is no liberality of feeling whatsoever. All come to scrape money together in order to go away, and meantime all the socialities are lost sight of."

CHAPTER X.

EXCURSION INTO THE INTERIOR—BELLEVUE—A TROPICAL FOREST
—PITCH LAKE—MOUNTAIN CABBAGE—SAN FERNANDO—GO-
VERNOR'S BALL—FRUITS—MAROON PARTY TO THE CARENAGE
—BRITISH RESIDENTS—ST. JOSEPH'S—HOME LEGISLATION—
CLIMATE—FEMALE SOCIETY.

ON the 19th of May I set off to visit the Pitch Lake at La Brae. I went by steamer to San Fernando, a distance of twenty-eight miles, intending to make my way from thence by land, as the steamer goes direct to La Brae only once a week, and I was anxious to pay my visit before the wet season, now about to commence.

From the capital down to San Fernando the coast is extremely flat and uninteresting, the first ten miles being along the immense swamps of Caroni, the exhalations from which at certain seasons make Port of Spain unhealthy. Towards San Fernando the country rises a little, and there are some small villages and sugar estates, with two or three important rivers, whilst some distance inland are the low hills of Montserrat.

I arrived at San Fernando early in the afternoon. The steamer is very slow. Eight hundred pounds sterling per annum is allowed by the Colonial Government to support it, as from swamps and want of bridges over two or three formidable rivers, land communication is at best very difficult, and in the rainy season impossible. The fare by the steamer is one dollar.

Conversing with a fellow-passenger on my intended trip, I found that serious difficulties existed to my making my way by land to La Brae, though it was only about sixteen miles from St. Fernando. There was, according to this statement, an immense impassable lagoon to cross in order to get to Orapouche; and when there, I should have to take a horse and guide, "or," said he, "you may take a boat from San Fernando direct to La Brae, but they will ask an enormous price; however," said my new friend, "you can go with me to Orapouche, and I will undertake to forward you safely to the Pitch Lake." To this civil proposal I assented. My friend turned out to be the manager of the fine estate of Bellevue at Orapouche.

San Fernando is a large village, having a Catholic and a Protestant church, a few stores, and an indifferent hotel. It is a shipping place for sugars, and in the season there are as many as five or six large ships here waiting for cargoes. There is no harbour, only a roadstead, and an immense flat extends so far out, that heavy vessels anchor rather more than a mile from the

shore. A biforked hill rises immediately above the village to the height of about five hundred feet.

As the boat of Mr. S——'s estate was not in attendance, he was obliged to hire one to Orapouche, a distance of six miles, the charge for which was two dollars and a half (ten shillings and sixpence), so readily do negroes get money. On seeing me, they demanded three dollars, which were not conceded. We ran the distance with a flowing sheet in an hour and a half. The water is so shoal, that people can wade a quarter of a mile and not be up to the waist. It is, however, extremely turbid. On our passage we surprised three sharks all together, and it was rather ludicrous to see how swiftly they scudded away as we surged past them. We saw also some mud-coloured pelicans (*Alcatias pelicanus fuscus*). The bay where we landed boasts only four or five houses, which have arisen from the necessities of the contiguous estate. There is nevertheless the customary store, in order that as much money may come back to the estate as possible, though the negroes are quite at liberty to lay out their earnings where they like, as not even an indirect influence is exercised over them.

The mill of Bellevue is worked by mules, and I got a very good insight into the *modus operandi* of managing a sugar estate, as Mr. S—— was the "smartest" planter in that part of the country, obtaining in consequence from the negroes the *soubriquet* of the Jack-Spaniard. "I have no hesitation in punishing them

when they deserve it," he said to me, "but I get my work done better than anybody else about here; and as I never cheat them (as many managers do), they are quite satisfied with me." And so the negroes really were, and all grinned as they welcomed him back. It was the signal, however, for renewed bustle, so true is it that "the eye of the master maketh diligent." As usual, all had gone wrong in his absence: the negroes laughed at the overseer; quarrels had ensued amongst the gang: and the first act of the return was to hold a court of inquiry.

About twenty coolies and a sirdar were employed here, and I had the opportunity of judging for myself how ill or well the system worked. I am sorry to say the result was not so satisfactorily as I had hoped. In the two days absence of Mr. S—— at Port of Spain, it appeared that a difference had sprung up between a brutal negro-driver named Sam, and an assistant cooly, during which Sam rope's-ended poor *Cudjeree*. On Sam's return to the mill after this feat, and after all trouble had apparently passed away, two coolies attacked him, when he defended himself negro fashion, that is, fiendishly biting the shoulder-blades of one of the Asiatics. This formed the subject of complaint by the whole cooly body, with the sirdar at their head, all salaaming most reverentially to us magnates. I was honoured with the epithet of Baba (father or padre), and Mr. S—— figured as Sahib (Lord), all the coolies chattering away at once in the most lachrymose tones. Sam was summoned, and

after a severe lecture was discharged. "Oh, berry well, Misser S——," he cried, "I no care—I go away." The coarse voice, brutal physiognomy, and short sturdy frame of Sam, stamped him as what in reality he was—a demon, capable of any atrocity. The coolies were told that if they chose to carry the thing further, they could apply to the cooly magistrate, Major F——, at Port of Spain. All seemed much rejoiced at the manner in which their part had been taken by Mr. S——, and they retired salaaming to the ground. Half the coolies were lame from jiggers, which they are too lazy to remove before the *nidus* or *sac* becomes a dangerous ulcer. All were described by Mr. S—— as being incorrigibly lazy and very ungrateful, expecting the rewards given them for good conduct and as an encouragement to persevere, to be continued in the same manner when they had not done anything to deserve them, besides grumbling at the mulcts or fines established on the estate for the *non-fulfilment* of their daily tasks. All the work is done by task—the severity of which may be inferred from the fact of the industrious amongst them finishing their work by eleven or twelve o'clock in the day, and going at large the rest of the time, not like negroes to work on their provision-grounds, thereby saving their funds, but to sing and—*drum*. Were they to be hired by the day or week, they would do no work at all. Amongst the females were two handsome girls, embodying the exquisite forms, movements, and costumes of Daniel's "Hindoo Girl." Their lower eyelids were blackened

with cohol, and the seams of their glossy black hair made bright red with vermillion, whilst beads and brass bangles finished as exquisite a picture of dark beauty as I ever could have imagined.

Mr. S—— was so kind as to ride over with me himself to the Pitch Lake, about ten miles distant. We were mounted on mules, which all things considered made the journey very well. Mules, like negroes, work as little as they can when outward bound. We passed several sugar estates, all in full work, to get as much sugar made as possible before the rains commence. This has been a most favourable season, and all are in high spirits.

The country planters are very different to the people of Port of Spain. If you come within hail of a planter's dwelling-house, you are warmly invited in, and sangaree, ale or porter, is forthwith produced.

For some time the road was exceedingly good, but just before reaching the estate of Mr. Justiniani, a Corsican, it turned sharp off, and entered the uncleared, virgin forest. Such a five miles can never be forgotten! All along I had heard of the bad road, and Signor J—— said, "*E assai cattiva la strada, molto, molto,*" but it was worse than anything that could be imagined. When through I positively shuddered to think that we must return the same way. Having passed a wooden fence and a barred gate, our first introduction to the forest was through thick brushwood not very formidable, but when we fairly entered the deep solemn woods, by a mere mule-path, with the high, high trees closing

in upon us on all sides, I felt quite a new sensation—I was awe-stricken! Up they shot so tall and straight, mostly expanding only at the top, that it made one quail to look aloft. Many of them were covered with a perfect mantle of parasites, whilst enormous vegetable cables hung suspended from others, interlaced, twisted, and interwoven with millions of smaller ropes and vegetable cords. Those trees that had limbs were marked at intervals with parasitical ulcers, a species of pine, or aloe, often of a dull crimson, on every bend. Then how strange the forms! some pendants were twisted like buffaloes' horns, a tangled net of elephantine strength. Many of the trees and forms were quite new to me. One highly characteristic tree was the Tyre,* a tall, slender shaft, spreading into a figure allied to a hand fire-screen. Then came the Balanger, having a leaf three feet high, formed like a gigantic spear. In fact, there was such an infinity of shrubs and trees allied to the palm and aloe as almost to set the enumeration of a botanist at defiance. One, however was not to be lightly passed over, it was the pit-muck, or Trinidad roseau, a shrub fifteen feet high, growing in clusters, allied but too closely to the gru-gru, as it was covered with sharp thorns two inches and a half long. This formidable shrub hemmed us in on either side so closely that it was with the utmost difficulty we could avoid being pierced by its spines. It seemed positively to fill up every interstice of the

* I can only give the local names.

forest, rendering it impossible to penetrate in any direction but that in which we were going. The silence had something awful in it. The sounds that did meet the ear only reminded us that man was far distant, being the occasional screaming of birds, the shrill notes of the cicada tribes, and now and then the sharp ringing clang of the carpenter bird, which sounds as if he were cutting down the trees with a silver axe.

These woods we knew abounded in parrots, monkeys, tiger-cats, and boa-constrictors, but we neither heard nor saw any of them. They punctiliously shun the path, and hid themselves in the deepest recesses of the gloomy forest. Still we might come across them, and it was necessary to keep a sharp look out. However, I believe that the only real danger to be apprehended was in coming unaware upon a boa constrictor, as from the curious lianas or pendants festooning in all directions around us, as well as the gnarled roots of trees coiling about the ground, we might stumble on one unperceived. This fear was not quite chimerical, as a boa-constrictor sixteen feet long, had only a week before been killed in the canes of Bellevue, of which Mr. S—— was manager.

Our mules had to pick their steps the whole way across the twisted roots of trees lying bare upon the soil; the interstices being worn into deep cavities by the transits of wayfarers like ourselves, not flat, but undulating, and by degrees we found ourselves descending into deep dark gloomy hollows, fit lairs for the Saurians of old. Every few yards, we came to the

trunk of some tree which had fallen across the path, and over which we had much difficulty to urge the mules, which were the very personifications of caution, added to which so sharp was one descent, that we had to dismount and let the animals scramble down as they best might. Nor was this all. The utmost care was necessary to avoid the lower branches of trees that would take us neck high, so that we had continually to duck our heads to the necks of our beasts; but in spite of all our care the pendant withes would every now and then catch us across the face and hold us fast for a time, sawing us across the nose and eyes until we broke through. Then we had to twist like eels to avoid the dangerous pit-muck, which at every turn stood ready to catch and tear us, or the tortuous career of the mule would bring our knees in fearful proximity with the trunks and stumps of trees. Not an instant could our attention be diverted from the path, and I got very tired and bewildered at such incessant watchfulness.

We found the lowest depths of the forest a mass of light-coloured mud of great tenacity, and passing this swampy place was the most disagreeable task of all, as the pit-mucks were so close on all sides, that in spite of every precaution I got several of their fearful spines sticking into my coat. Truly it was a dismal place! and how gladly did I once again catch a glimpse of the blue sky. One thing in our favour was that it was a cool ride, for the sun could hardly penetrate so impervious a canopy. The difficulties of European travel sink into insignificance in comparison with a

journey through a tropical forest; but wearying and distracting though it was, I considered it one of the finest things that I had yet seen.

We got into the open country by degrees, and came to sugar-canes once more; arriving at last at an estate, where we obtained at the store some pale ale, bread, and raisins: cheese is a rare commodity in such places.

Our proximity to the Pitch Lake was announced by the fetid smell of the hard black roads, formed of bitumen and clay; and a quarter of a mile brought us to the margin of the lake itself, looking like an immense black swamp, or repository for night soil, intersected with narrow canals of water, meandering in all directions, and interspersed with clumps of low shrubs, reeds, and rushes. The most absurd description given of this place, is that quoted in "Osborn's Guide Book to the West Indies," a singularly inaccurate work, got up merely as an advertisement to the West Indian Steam Packet Company.

The whole surface of the lake was hard enough to walk over with perfect impunity, though standing still in any one place for five minutes, the heels of one's boots sank in an inch or so, but in merely walking over it, the feet made no impression whatever. The canals by which this formation is intersected, was, in no case that we saw, more than a couple of feet in depth, or four feet in width, averaging much less. They were filled with clear, brown, tasteless water, at

which sundry washwomen were pursuing their avocations. The idea of these patches of bitumen bending down, until the shoulders of an experimentaliser would be "level with the surface," is something too absurd.

I have no doubt but that were a man, or any heavy animal, to remain a whole day on the lake, in any given spot, he would gradually be engulfed, as when we returned to the mules, which had been fastened to a clump of low bushes, we found that in half an hour the animals had sunk to the fetlocks; each foot, however, having its own individual hole, and the general surface of the formation being absolutely unaffected by the weight. The area of the lake may be a mile in breadth, by a mile and a half in length. It is oval, and has its boundaries perfectly defined by a belt of forest. The smell is fetid enough. Of course its depth cannot, from the nature of the material, be ascertained; but wherever we stood, the slight indentation of the surface instantly filled with water. There is little doubt that underneath, the bituminous exudation is incessantly in action, and that it coagulates on the surface from the influence of the atmosphere, cooling into distinct masses that press upon each other, and a kennel of water is the result. Down the centre of the water, the crevice through which it has risen may be clearly traced. It looks like bog-water, being of a dark-brown, and the surface of the pitch formation is a sooty-black. The greatest use to which this asphaltum is applied, is in making

roads in its vicinity. When mixed in proper proportions with clay or loam, it is an excellent material. It can scarcely be applied as fuel, the material being of an impracticable nature, flaring up and running through the bars. It is, however, in limited use when mixed with mogass, or the crushed canes dried, and feeds the fire of the sugar boiling-houses of the contiguous estates. In an available site, it might supply an inexhaustible supply of gas.

Having gazed our fill, hopped over the little channels of water, dug up a bit of the bitumen as a relic, and conversed a while with the negro women who were washing, we set out on our return; and it was not without trepidation that I plunged once more into the gloomy recesses of the forest. Nevertheless, our return was not quite so sombre, as the now oblique rays of the sun penetrated the dense foliage, and dimly lit up these vegetable glades. We got to Bellevue by five o'clock, tolerably tired.

The next day was the pay-day of the coolies, many of whom looked very blue at their accounts being checked by set-offs at the store, for salt-fish, rice, &c. Although apparently the row of the previous day had been settled, they had—it appeared—sent to Port of Spain for the cooly magistrate, Major Fagan, so Sam was good-naturedly warned to get out of the way. Next morning, Major Fagan, who speaks Hindostannee, came and gave the coolies a rating, telling them that they were fools, and did not know when they were well off, that

their sirdar cheated them, he being entrusted by them to purchase all their stores, and making a profit on every article. Besides this, and notwithstanding a most explicit agreement had been made with them for certain work to be done at a certain price, they in the face of it wanted to receive the same pay as the negroes, which, as they were not capable of executing such heavy tasks, was refused. So they struck work, and ten or twelve of them marched off next day to Port of Spain to idle about the streets. This is the common wind-up of the coolies on every estate, and they prefer a most inadequate and precarious existence in the woods, to steady and well-paid labour on an estate; for four bits, or one shilling and eightpence a day for six hours work, with a house and provision grounds provided for them, *is* good pay. As a general thing, the sirdars are great rogues, and cheat them unconscionably, and put them up to all sorts of manœuvres, which invariably end badly for the whole gang. Notwithstanding the strike, most of the coolies continued to occupy the estate houses, though they refused to salaam us as we passed. It is the policy of the managers to humour the coolies a good deal, if only to show the negro that he is not so indispensable as he fancies himself to be. The sirdars usually communicate with the managers in French, which, all things considered, he of the Bellevue gang spoke remarkably well.

With what object I do not know, but the following

announcement was put amongst the advertisements of May 12th, 1847, in a Trinidad newspaper, called the "Spectator."

"COOLIES! COOLIES! COOLIES!

"A cargo of these animals just imported, fresh and in good condition. Terms, cash.

"Also on hand, some of former importations, will be sold cheap, being rather the worse for jiggars. Apply to A. B. C. & Co., Cruel Lane."

That three parts of the coolies are lame from jiggars is true, but it is solely for want of the commonest care on their own parts, as the negroes, although equally exposed, rarely suffer. It is one of the few things in which the negroes are prompt.


I found that the female coolies were the mistresses, not the wives of the men. One system which Mr. S—— was obliged to adopt, in order to get the work done, was not to pay a stiver for any fractional part of a daily task. If not quite completed, all that day's labour went for nothing. In this way alone was he able to keep the coolies up to their work.

We had a novelty at dinner, a mountain cabbage, so generally and so justly esteemed. Besides which, the sacrifice of such a large tree for a guest, is properly considered a great compliment. This cabbage may be eaten raw, when it is very like a young cocoa-nut in taste, but when dressed, *secundem artem* by a black cook, it really is an admirable vegetable, equal I think

to sea-kale. The cabbage is extremely white, and when this apparent trunk of a tree is brought in under a man's arm, novices would never guess what it was. The term cabbage would mislead anybody, and the usual description of its being in the heart of the tree is very obscure. The cabbage-palm rises to the height of fifty or sixty feet, in one smooth, grey cylinder; on this, but perfectly distinct in colour and texture, is set a bright apple-green bulb, which rises ten or fifteen feet higher. This is the cabbage, and from its top spring the usual branches of the tribe of palms. The green skin, or rind is peeled off, and the solid mass within, of the purest white, is the edible part of this singular tree.

A coral snake, three feet long, was brought to the door writhing in the agonies of death. The bite of this reptile is very deadly. It had been caught disporting itself in a pond dug for water, when its head had been smashed by a negro. The fangs were very apparent, and it was considered a large specimen. Its colour was alternate bands of bright-red (whence its name), and black and white. There are two other very venomous snakes in Trinidad, the mappapsee and the cascabele.

I returned to San Fernando in a canoe, far too ticklish a mode of conveyance for a novice to be quite at ease in, especially as we had, for the Gulph of Paria, a heavy head sea, the trade wind blowing strongly. These pirogues are quite round at bottom, having no keel at all. Our's was coppered *inside*, notwith-



standing which she made a good deal of water, and we had to bale out two or three times on our voyage. The hands can only get in and out by sitting at the same instant on either gunwale, and then by delicate simultaneous movements they preserve the balance, a precaution which makes one nervous when seen for the first time. Our pirogue was carefully trimmed with an iron weight for ballast, and we rowed across in about two hours.

I left San Fernando for Port of Spain, at half-past eleven, A.M., in a packet drogher. On nearing the port it fell a dead calm, when we had a characteristic display of negro diligence. Two of the hands, stout negro lads of eighteen, were desired to get out the sweeps, as the current would otherwise set the vessel down to leeward. This, after all possible delay on their part, was done, and standing up to row they barely dipped the sweeps in the water, absolutely making no way at all. This lazy and inefficient movement continuing for half an hour, they were ordered to get into the boat to tow, when every sort of delay and hindrance was made. Songs were sung, and jokes made at the captain, a coloured man, until he became peremptory, when three hands reluctantly and lazily got into the boat; and as an act of defiance to the skipper, rowed round the bows on either side of the vessel, loudly laughing, and singing "Old Dan Tucker," without making the slightest strain upon the tow-rope. I never before witnessed behaviour so insolent, nor would it for a moment have been tolerated in

any part of Europe. Here the captain, though greatly irritated, dared not even remonstrate, lest the crew should leave him altogether. Our pilot, (a black) observed to me, "It was an unfortunate day for this country when the negroes got their liberty; for now we cannot get them to work—or those willing to work cannot get good situations, whilst *larking* vagabonds such as these, do exactly as they like." I thought this speech from one as black as themselves, a curious comment upon the recent legislation for these countries.

After three quarters of an hour lost in "larking" in this manner, the insulting rascals at length condescended to pull away lustily, and we got up to Port of Spain by eight o'clock at night. Some seem to think that this state of things will alter—so it may after the lapse of the next five hundred years or so, but not as long as an acre of ground (obtained for a trifle, and within the reach of every negro in six months), will, of itself, support him.

On the Queen's birthday an artillery salute was fired from Bum-fiddle Fort* on the jetty, and a *feu de joie* from the garrison of St. James's. Men cheered, and I felt cheered myself at witnessing such demonstrations of loyalty. I dined at the mess of the 19th detachment, and walked home by the light of a brilliant moon between ten and eleven o'clock at night. The road lay through Savannahs, at this time in a perfect

* Sticklers for correctness contend that this beautifully sonorous appellation is a corruption of *bonne fidelle*: it may be so.

roar from myriads of frogs, to which must be added the chirpings in an infinite variety of tones of the *grillæ* tribes.

From the want of roads and bridges the mountainous parts of Trinidad are all but inaccessible, and parties visiting Toko at the north-eastern corner of the island, are obliged to go by sea through the Boccas, and beat up outside generally for two days, and often three, before they can reach it! Some of the rivers abound in small alligators, or caïmen—the Caroni river in particular.

The Episcopal church of Port of Spain is a very handsome cathedral-like structure, with an extinguisher-steeple, reduced from fear of earthquakes to a pocket-size, and for a wonder out here, the rector, Mr. Chamberlain, is an excellent reader, so that the service is performed with something like solemnity; one's ears not being wounded by such false accents as "*comfort-able*," or such barbarisms as "*marciful*." Collections, however, are now made in such a way that it is found expensive to go to church more than once a quarter: so much for Puseyite innovations! The plate-bearers do not stand at the door as of yore, but go round to every individual, so that those who do not contribute are marked men, whatever their means or inclination may be.

The wet season commenced at the end of May with thunder and lightning, the first that I had heard for some months. A great quantity of sugar had been got ready for shipment; but there were no ships to

carry it away, all being engaged in taking provisions to the Irish, so that famine there puts bread into the mouths of people elsewhere.

The following circumstance occurred in Trinidad, indicating the degree of intelligence that prevails amongst negroes: A gentleman, Mr. D——, of St. Joseph's bought a very handsome new saddle, which he ordered his negro servant to carry home, dust carefully, and put away until wanted, at the same time giving the man a bottle of blacking and a set of shoe brushes that he had purchased. On Mr. D.'s return home the servant came to him in great perturbation, and asked, "Ky, Massa, whar you buy dat saddle?" "Where did I buy it! What's that to you—what do you want to know for?" "'Cause, Massa, I use de hol' bottle of blacking, an' I rub 'um for dis hour, but he won't shine half so well as old boot."

The Roman Catholic *fête* of Corpus Christi, celebrated on the 3rd of June, is no longer commemorated with any magnificence at Port of Spain. The soldiers are not ordered out to do it honour, nor does the Governor, like Sir Ralph Woodford, walk in the ridiculous procession. To one accustomed to see these ecclesiastical pageants in Milan, Rome, or Sicily, this of Trinidad was a very shabby affair. The bishop is said to be very much ashamed of it, and when walking under a crimson velvet canopy was so huddled up by attendants, that he could scarcely be seen. The female communicants were all negresses, and looked funny enough in virgin white—a colour that here is by no

means emblematical of purity. Few people know that the Corpus Christi is held in commemoration of the day on which the sacrament was first publicly administered in Rome after the death of St. Peter.

There was a ball at the Governor's house on the 4th of June, in celebration of the Queen's birthday. Among the guests were one jet-black man and several coloured people, a vicious attempt to establish social equality, much on the principle that Louis Philippe, when he used to invite two or three private soldiers to his balls at the Tuileries. In order to make a show of equality throughout the West Indies, the Governors have private instructions to show all sorts of attentions to the coloured population, and these being mostly hucksters or people of the lowest class, mingled with vulgar white shopkeepers, and a large proportion of coarsely raw Scotsmen, the oddity of the assemblage may be conceived. However, as the majority were in some way dealers in dry goods, that is, linen-drapers, the dresses of the females were very passable—they got their materials at the trade price.

On the part of his Excellency the affair was very well got up, and great credit is due to Lord Harris for his liberality, as the expenses (at least five hundred pounds) were defrayed out of his own private purse—the fireworks alone cost one hundred pounds. The present government do not allow any money for such purposes. Amongst some varieties which came out per steamer from England we had *tête de sanglier farcie*, or as it was more classically designated by

the Caledonian part of the company, "pegs-heed stuuffed."

Many say, that of late years, society, and particularly morality, has very much improved in Trinidad. It may be so, but what it must have been heretofore it would be difficult to imagine, for such instances of villainy have come to my knowledge, perpetrated by those who hold the highest rank in Trinidad, as could scarcely be exceeded in the United States. "Things are done here, Sir, with impunity," said a member of council to me, "that in England would drive a man out of society. The most atrocious acts of scoundrelism are forgiven and forgotten, and the perpetrator received in society again as if nothing had happened." And this is what Trinidad *is*, not what it *was*. I no longer wondered that they were afraid of the prying eyes of strangers, and very shy of any one who could write.

From the paucity of gentlemen or educated men out here, the clergy of the Established Church are throughout the West Indies a very inferior body of persons; wretched readers and worse preachers, yet pompous. The majority of them have been merely at Codrington College, Barbadoes, or else St. Bee's men, and when they come out get ordained. Some of them have been village-schoolmasters and Methodist parsons, (the local garrison chaplain to Port of Spain is a *ci-devant* custom-house officer), all of whom have found it more to their interest to enter the Episcopal Church. Occasionally, amongst the higher

clergy one meets with a gentleman, but it is an exception to the rule; and to any one acquainted with the world, the society of these half parish-clerks, half parsons, is very disagreeable. I never before saw so poor a church establishment. Puseyism is the prevailing Episcopal belief inculcated in Trinidad.

I had been some time in Trinidad before I met with a grenadilla, one of the most vaunted fruits of the West Indies. The seeds and gelatine are scooped out, and wine, sugar, and nutmeg added, and the preparation served round in wine-glasses. When all is done it is but a bad imitation of a strawberry. I never was more astonished in my life, than in listening to the exclamations of its "deliciousness." Excepting only the pine-apple, the fruits here will not bear a comparison with those of Europe, or even of America.

I joined a maroon party down to the Carenage, about seven miles below Port of Spain. Such a stock of fluids as we had with us—ale, porter, punch and claret, with lots of ice! and such a set of hearty fellows! I was the only Englishman, and the other Europeans were three Germans, educated gentlemen, though merchants, well supported by a creole Frenchman. We marooned in the house of a mulatto fisherman, the seigneur of the place, where we were feasted with proper, the finest fish in the West Indies, and snapper. But the worst of it was that the fish was drenched in rancid melted-butter, revolting to an Englishman. Fish sauce is rarely met with in such places, and the only condiment is chilly peppers. Salt

here is invariably coarse, and there is a curious custom throughout the West Indies of putting green and yellow pepper-pods in the salt-cellar. It looks pretty enough, but is a great nuisance. Salt-spoons are seldom seen in this quarter of the world—the point of one's knife being the usual substitute.

As we roamed about, I observed that the Gulf of Paria is gradually filling up, so that what was deep water forty years ago, is at present scarcely up to one's knees. We climbed the mountains which are exceedingly picturesque, and one peculiar-looking tree, the poui, which grows on the sides, is sure to arrest the attention. It looks like one mass of bright yellow, and may be considered characteristic of Trinidad. Altogether we had a very pleasant day; but with one thing I could not but be struck, that is, the vast superiority of all the foreigners out here over the English of the same rank, our countrymen, whether English or Scotch, being uneducated and vulgar. The British Trinidadians are cold, selfish, and full of ridiculous pretension, without qualifications of any sort to justify it. There are very few Irish in Trinidad, and those very low ones. There is an utter want of principle amongst all classes, and great peculation is known to be going on in many of the official departments, but no one likes to interfere.

I breakfasted one morning *à la fourchette* with Signor G——, of Bologna, of a noble family, a doctor of laws, and a nephew of the late Cardinal Gioanetti, Archbishop of Bologna. Like the rest of the people

here, Signor G—— is a merchant, and keeps a shop. I merely mention this, to shew the great difference there is in rank between the foreign settlers at Trinidad and the British following the same pursuits. Signor G—— was educated at the University of Lucca, studied Greek with the present Cardinal Mezzofanti, and is a most accomplished amateur of music, playing the piano-forte and singing in a masterly manner, speaking also, in addition to his native tongue, English, French, and Spanish ; yet he makes not the least pretension, which, as I have already observed, all the British shopkeepers display. There is also a French Viscount, a shopkeeper, who, of course, has dropped his title. However little the title may go for, these *ci-devant* noblemen are all educated, well-bred gentlemen ; whilst the English, on the contrary, are proverbial for their coarseness, with a predominance of the importance of a vestryman, a churchwarden, or of a Mister Bumble, the master of a parish poor-house

The habit so peculiar to the negro and the coloured tribes, as to become a characteristic, that of talking to themselves with a vehemence that is startling as they walk along the streets, prevails out here to a laughable degree. It seems as if it were an impossibility for them to keep their thoughts and feelings to themselves. Often have I turned round in astonishment to hear myself, as I thought, abused, by some one who had overtaken me, only to find a dingy caricature of huma-

nity pouring out her Xantippical wrath to herself, jerked forth with the tones of a virago.

The novelty once over, I began to find the West Indies a very tiresome place; the ignorance of the majority of all ranks of that knowledge common to the educated in every country, precludes anything like profitable social intercourse, so that the greater part of those one meets become bores of the first magnitude. The knowledge of the planters is confined to sugar-making; of the tradesman to his dry goods, boots, or provisions; whilst the clergy are vulgar and presuming. Nothing remains but the military, and a few (not all) of the official people, for the majority of those even are very second-rate—too worthless for England, but considered good enough for these critically situated colonies!

Trinidad has but one range of mountains worthy of the name; these extend in a straight line from the Boccas to Toco, on the extreme north coast. There are inferior eminences, as the Monserrat hills, and one lone mountain, Mount Tammina, rising isolated in a champagne country, like Monte Sorractes in the Campagna of Rome, as nearly as may be in the centre of the island; beyond these nothing hilly of consequence is to be found, save the above-mentioned range. These mountains, however, are divided from each other by beautiful lateral vallies, Diego Martin, St. James's, Mariaval, Maraccas, and others. In this last there is a cascade of great local celebrity, which we set off to see in

company with Captain S—— and Dr. L——, of the 19th regiment, and although we did not reach it, had a very pleasant day.

The drive is exceedingly beautiful from Port of Spain to St. Joseph's, once the capital of Trinidad, though now only an insignificant village. On our left lay the soft languishing mountains, feathered to their tops with dense woods, a paradise at a distance, but involving very rough work when amongst the trees. On our right spread out the wide Savanna of Caroni, and further on, the Savanna Grande, beyond which again, dim with distance, lay the Monserrat hills, as high as those of Hampstead; the whole showing much the same extent of woody country as may be seen from Richmond Hill looking towards Windsor, a scene which it very much resembles. Along the road we passed a few sugar estates, and many clearings, in situations worthy of a gentleman's park in England, yet covered with shabby negro huts, tenanted by a race utterly incapable of appreciating the beautiful locality.

It was at St. Joseph's that Sir Walter Raleigh considered it expedient to massacre the unoffending natives, in hopes thereby of making himself master of the presumed *El Dorado*. In later times St. Joseph's was the scene of an expiatory tragedy, having been the head-quarters of a West India negro regiment, the privates of which mutinied, and fired upon their officers whilst at mess, but fortunately not one was hit. The ringleaders were of course shot. The mutiny originated in the extreme stupidity and ignorance of

the blacks, native Africans, and was wholly unprovoked.

At St. Joseph's, we turned sharply off to the left, and drove six or seven miles along a tolerable road, until we found that it ceased to be "*carrozzabile*," when we also ascertained that we had far overshot our mark, and that, in fact, it would be too late to visit the cascade that day. Yet we availed ourselves of the opportunity to explore a valley which may well be called exquisite. Its average width may be about half a mile, expanding here and there into lovely amphitheatres of mountains, from a thousand to two thousand feet in height, their wooded sides showing patches of cultivation, where rough clearings had been made for provision grounds. The inhabitants are a mixture of Spanish mulattoes and negroes, with a sprinkling of civilized Indians. All these races speak a *patois* of Spanish and creole French, most unintelligible to strangers in the way in which French is invariably blubbered out by the negroes, joined to a Spanish tongue so corrupt that *mantéca* (butter), was called lard, and *mantakia** (lard), was asserted to be the proper word for butter. We scarcely found a person who could speak English, so could gain but very imperfect information as to our locality. The mongrel Spanish women are an extremely ignorant race, quite uneducated. All these people, however, are proprietors of the land which they cultivate; as no one here thinks

* This would seem to be a local name, however, as no such word as *mantakia* is to be found in the Spanish Dictionary.

of renting ground. Sugar canes are not planted in the Valley of Maraccas, but *lacæ*, which thrives to perfection, is cultivated, whilst for coffee the soil is quite unsuited.

The great characteristic of the ride was decidedly the magnificent clusters of bamboos (*Bambusa guadua*) that lined the road. These most glorious productions of a tropical country, spring up in enormous clumps to the height of fifty feet at least, and then curve elegantly over, nodding to meet their plumed relatives across the lovely green lanes—arches of Nature's gothic, compared with which, those of art shrink into insignificance. The foliage emulates the ostrich in the fulness and waving gracefulness of its vegetable feathers, the soft small leaves quivering like the aspen in the gentle breeze, which, nevertheless, makes the sturdy dark-green stems snap and creak as it sweeps through them, whilome breaking short off the Polyphemian poles, and strewing the wreck, like a dismasted ship, across the road. This was exquisite as a picture, but rather disagreeable to drive a gig under, tickling our nerves most sensibly as we jumped, jolted, hopped, and undulated, over ground that would make a corduroy road seem smooth, with ups and downs that did good duty for a course of galvanism. Had I been hypochondriacally inclined, I might have fancied myself a cup and ball, so often was I thrown up and caught again by the distracted vehicle.

Land in the valley of the Marraccas is worth one hundred dollars (twenty pounds) a *quarrie* (three acres

and one-fifth); but as each inhabitant has his own ground to cultivate, which employs all his energies and the individuals of his family, there is no one to labour for a neighbour, consequently the greater part of their soil must long remain uncleared. I have no doubt that Irish and Scotch properly *costumé* for the climate, could cultivate these lands very well; in fact, I know that whites can do it, because I am acquainted with some who do with impunity labour in person on their own grounds.

I saw a procession of those funny little insects, the parasol ants. It was the drollest thing that one could imagine to watch them *en route*, stretching out in one long dark train, each furnished with a green leaf, thrice as large as itself, marching along under its shade as consequentially as so many Emperors of China, in grand costume. The leaf, which is accurately bitten round, out of a larger one, is in form very like a hand screen, and is carried erect over its person, as jauntily as a negress carries her parasol to guard her delicate complexion from the sun. The first ant of this *genus* that I saw was an isolated one, and not being aware of its habits I could not conceive why it took the trouble to carry so ponderous a leaf over the harassing inequalities of the ground, and it was only on inquiry that I ascertained it was the habit of the insect to carry an umbrella, which I subsequently found was used to construct their nests, of which I examined several.

The armadillo, the tiger-cat, a small species of sloth, and some large fierce monkeys, inhabit the higher

regions of the Maraccas valley ; but they are only seen *longo intervallo* by the residents : therefore a casual visitor has no chance of catching a sight of one.

In Port of Spain the South Americans from the Main, are very fond of improvising, and at night one's ears are tortured by these mongrel Spaniards, bawling their ditties to the twangings of a cracked guitar : and some black gentleman eking out the doleful chaunt with an *ad libitum* accompaniment on an asthmatic flute ; as appropriate as a fugue on Rory O'More would be to the Hundredth Psalm.

There is a curious drink common to the West Indies call morbie, or morbee. It is a bitter, formed it is said by a decoction of the *lignum-vitæ* wood and bitter ash, allowed to ferment. It is sold in uncorked wine bottles, which foam at the neck, and when well made, is far from unpleasant. It is only drunk before breakfast as an appetiser. Bitters are in great request here, and a glass of wine and bitters is a very common stimulant before dinner. Wines and spirits of all sorts are much cheaper in the West Indies than in England ; very fair brandy can be got for two dollars and fifty cents. (ten shillings and five pence) a gallon—far better indeed than the majority of the wretched stuff sold in England for dark cognac. A regular trick in trade here is to export and pay duty on the imperial gallon, selling the same at the common and short gallon. This, of course, is a fraud—but trade here is nothing but a fraud ; the whole population of this island being most unprincipled.

The comparative absence of bugs and fleas, is to those who have travelled over the European Continent, or the East, a remarkable feature in the West Indies; whilst from the arrangements made for sleeping, musquitoes amount to nothing. In the day-time they disappear; and considering that a common house-fly is rarely seen here, the fly nuisance is far less than in Europe. Those who have travelled over Germany, Italy, or Sicily, in the dog-days, cannot fail to recollect the annoyance caused in those countries by flies and fleas; whilst the butchers, and kebaub shops of Constantinople, show sights in that way unparalleled elsewhere. It was noticed by Humboldt and has been corroborated here, that it is the female musquitoes alone that bite. I do not recollect having seen within the Tropics a blue-bottle—that abominable polluter of our meat at home. In New Orleans, the musquitoes are so bad that ladies are obliged to read, write, or work, enclosed in a large cage of transparent gauze.

The West Indies is a hot region, certainly; but without any of the *agrémens* that in Europe make equally hot countries delightful; for instance, Naples, Palermo, Vienna, all of them in the summer time are warmer than these islands. Here, on the contrary, life is a coarse scramble for money, by coarse, selfish people. There are no elegancies, nor is there any refinement. Often at sunset have I paraded the little wooden jetty of Port of Spain, and mused over the difference of scene that Milan, Venice, or Genoa, would at such an hour present, saddened to think that

the lovely Tropics should be desecrated by the presence of such a miserable race, white and black. Never did a British business population appear so odious before, unredeemed as it is by a single ray of liberality or right feeling !

It shows a great want of political discernment in the legislators at home, that they do not consider all these colonies integral parts of the British empire, and assimilate them to the mother country in laws, financial system, weights, measures, and usages. It is true that, by such regulations, the interests of a set of unmitigated knaves who profit by the present system would be compromised, but then the public in general would be protected from fraud. The fact is, that with the exception of Colonel Reid, and Lord Harris, most of the Governors of these islands, with their secretaries, are very unfit men for such situations. Not having by any means energy enough for such offices, they are but too often made the dupes of those around them. The qualification necessary is bold, eagle-eyed energy, to cope with the nefarious people who fill the subordinate official situations.

The police and town regulations of Port of Spain are wretched. In the street in which I lived (Chacon Street), the most disgraceful *fracas* and drunken brawls took place at every hour of the day, until the whole neighbourhood was in an uproar. There was a grog-shop kept by low Spaniards, and out of this den of vice issued all sorts of disturbances ; yet a policeman was never to be seen, or if called in, was afraid to interfere. Black

policemen are themselves barbarians, brought up to consider such things as a matter of course, and therefore will not interfere with what seems so natural to them. No black or coloured man is fit to be a police-officer, simply because he sympathizes too much with the ruffians whom he is called upon to restrain. Children, from black to almost white, and up to five years of age, ran stark naked through our street, and this in itself was not an agreeable sight. Carts, with their lazy owners inside, gallop through the *Calle* to the manifest danger of life and limb, yet are never checked. The town-council, whose business it is to regulate these things, are chiefly coloured men; ignorant, conceited creoles, utterly incompetent for such offices. So a system of misrule, jobbing, and imbecility results, that quite astonishes a European accustomed to order, showing clearly that coloured people are utterly incapable of filling offices of trust.

Some people are silly enough to say, that these colonies are of no value to the mother country; but, even if they bring her no revenue, the colonies are to England the stepping-stones by which she strides over the world. Give them up, and she will be like the lion shorn of his mane and tail; she could lash the world no longer. No, if the work of destruction be not yet consummated, she must at all risks retain her colonies. If she gives them up, it will only be for the Americans to take them, for they know their value full well.

Amongst the negroes, cutaneous diseases are so

common, that you rarely ever see a fine black skin, but very generally they are covered with an infinity of leprous blotches, or white scurf. This is also the case with a large portion of the coolies. Leprosy is to the black what scrofula is to the white, so common that it is rare to find one who is not tainted. Leprosy is also carried up through all the varieties of colour to the *quasi* white who has African blood in his veins, rendering any amalgamation of the two races an experiment of very doubtful wisdom. It is not uncommon to see the feet of black men and women spotted with patches of pure (white) flesh-colour; this of course is disease. Elephantiasis too is very common in Trinidad. There is a tendency in the climate of the Antilles to cause the skin of white people to ulcerate. I found in my own case, that several minute ulcers formed on one wrist, invariably having a hair for a nucleus. This suppurated, forming puss to the extent of a pin's head. If left to themselves, these ulcers became absorbed in two or three days, or the cure was facilitated by opening them with a needle, when they dried up and disappeared. Old wounds, if the sufferer have any, open a fresh, as poor Sir Evan McGregor found to his cost at Barbadoes; and if there be the slightest taint of *struma* in the system, it is sure to develop itself here. Phthisis, however, is checked, if not cured, and rheumatism disappears altogether. The eternal summer is very delightful to the feelings, but in the course of time it tells on the

constitution, and a degree of lassitude is felt that often leads to the use and abuse of wine and spirits, from the temporary relief such stimulants afford. With such a sudorific as lemon-grass, fever does not usually last more than a few hours. A seidlitz-powder once a week, as an alterative, is a great preventive of any serious accumulation of bile; and I also found that a tea-spoonful of cream of tartar in a glass of sweetened water at rising in the morning, was cooling to the system.

The blessing of an unmixed white population can only be appreciated by those who have been in the West Indies; none but such as have been amongst the negroes and mongrels of these islands can form the slightest idea of the wretchedness of having anything to do with them and their infernal tempers, now that they are free and have the power of showing them. In the slave states of America, Jonathan knows how to keep them in order, and even in the free States, they are compelled to be civil, attentive and industrious. Nor even there can they rise above the grade of waiters or of house servants. Here, where one is mixed up with them every hour of the day, and where so much of one's comfort is absolutely dependent on them, the lazy, careless, stupid performance of their domestic duties renders life miserable. Not only is everything badly done in the most dawdling manner, but you must put up with it, as the slightest reproof or exposition subjects you to an impertinent answer, or a

series of audible mutterings, the tithe of which in England would subject the insolent menial to an instant dismissal.

Major U——, of the 19th regiment, told me, that at Demerara the regiment was compelled to employ a troop of soldiers solely to go about and prevent the negro mothers from beating their children in the inhuman manner that they were accustomed to do. Another very disagreeable thing in a house is, the necessity there is of listening to the horrible jabbering, hoarse laughter, and singing, or the incessant squabbles of your servants as they sit or lie about on the stairs (a very favourite resting-place). To order them to be quiet, is deemed an insult, and will be resented as such in some way or other. My own plan, and one that worked successfully enough, was, to keep them at a great distance—never to take a liberty with them or to permit a freedom. Of course I was stared at, thought to be very curious, and not particularly liked; but I got better served. The negroes have been so befooled by the philanthropists, that they believe themselves to be objects of universal interest, and in consequence have been most thoroughly spoiled; so that being put in their places now and then, opens their eyes and does them good. In our house in Trinidad, we had one of the largest and most insolent of the race. She had thoroughly got the better of the silly mistress of the house, and would have domineered over the whole of us if she had not

been brought up with a round turn now and then. Seeing the Tropics is one thing, but one soon gets tired of the wretched population.

The negro women are very fond of smoking cigars; and the Spaniards from the Main very rarely go into a shop without stealing something to add to their purchases. Low grog-shops and hucksters, selling spirits of the vilest quality, abound in all directions; and as both Spaniards and negroes are a horribly drunken race, they do not want customers.

Of the fruits of Trinidad, the far-famed avocado-zabbaccá, or alligator-pear (*anglicè*, subalterns'-butter; *Laurus persea*, Humb.) will excite disappointment. I had read such hyperbolical descriptions of its exquisite flavour, that I had prepared myself to eat something closely allied to the golden apples of the Hesperides; the sad reality was, that it is as nearly as may be flavourless, though not at all disagreeable, and when mixed with pepper and salt, becomes a tolerable substitute for butter. It has, nevertheless, an essentially vegetable taste that cannot be mistaken. The skin is either of a dark purple or dark green, the inside is of an apple-yellow, and contains an enormous stone in its centre, rather more than one-third as large as the fruit itself. Considering that West India butter is detestably rancid stuff, the avocado-pear is not without its value. If you were to take some bulky field-cucumbers, peel them, scrape out the seeds and boil the vegetable part,

they would represent a considerable family of West India esculents—as vegetable marrow, cristophene, the gourd tribes in general, and perhaps also subalterns’-butter; the two first being watery imitations of a boiled cabbage-stalk, and, with the last, all but flavourless. One curious item of an Antillian *cuisine* is the sweet plantain cut into pieces, fried (to overflowing) in brown fat, and sprinkled with white sugar.

To any one accustomed to the highly educated, elegant, and *spirituelle* female society of Europe, I know nothing more disagreeable than the absence of all conversable women in these out-of-the-way colonies. Generally speaking, creole women are utterly uninformed. They sometimes have a few flimsy accomplishments; but as they never read anything better than a novel, their conversation is limited to the commonest local or domestic subjects. They are, however, sufficiently conceited, and have wretched tempers. A European gentlewoman (*par excellence*) may be sought here in vain, unless by some lucky accident you happen to stumble upon the wife or daughter of a dignified clergyman, or distinguished officer, transitorily deposited in the colony. The majority of European females have either been governesses in England, or have come out as shopwomen, usually marrying respectable tradesmen, and then setting up as aristocracy; so that their manners, style, and accomplishments at once betray their origin. The fun of it is, that as they do not

choose to believe in the existence of any society of a higher standard, they think that because their company presents but little attractions to you, you cannot be accustomed to good society. Amongst the English females also, there is a great deal of tract delivering, missionary meeting, and Bible Society doings, and if you hold the "Tea and Bible" class in little esteem, you are immediately proscribed.

CHAPTER XI.

PROJECTED RAILROAD—INTERIOR OF THE ISLAND—THE WATER-FALL OF MARACCAS—TROPICAL SHOWERS—A CRITICAL SITUATION—DANGEROUS ADVENTURE—AN EARTHQUAKE.

TRINIDAD has now been under the dominion of England for fifty years, and although, according to Dr. de Verteuil, this island is only fifty-two miles by thirty-eight, the greater part is as little known as the interior of Africa. This partly arises from the indifference of former governors (Sir Ralph Woodford excepted), and from the utter inefficiency of the persons by whom the governors are surrounded. From Port of Spain to Toko, a distance of fifty miles, the road is only made as far as Guanapo, eighteen miles, leaving some of the finest land in the island accessible only to negroes; whilst rivers, extremely dangerous from their muddy shores, in which sometimes men and horses are lost, are left without bridges. Were proper roads opened to Toko, a white population would

leaven the ferocious tribes who at present form its sole inhabitants. Dr. de Verteuil is the only spirited and enterprising public man in the colony, but unassisted as he is, he can do comparatively little.

The opposition to the projected railroad through Trinidad was dictated by a very ludicrous motive. The necessary influx of capital and of knowing fellows from England would have lowered the pretensions of the hitherto great men of the island so much, that they would become mere nonentities, and sink to their true level, which is a very secondary one; and therefore they fight against it. The railroad would be of inestimable advantage to Trinidad, and throw the island hitherto a *terra incognita* open, whilst the capital introduced would create such intersections as would render every portion of land available. The remuneration, however, proposed to be given to the Railroad Company was excessive—no less than a grant of one thousand acres of land for every mile of railroad. Still, without this, under the present system, another century at least must elapse before Trinidad can become even imperfectly known; and the European knowledge and talent which the railway must necessarily have brought in its wake, would, as a matter of course, have led to a thorough examination of the natural productions and capabilities of the island, as well under the surface as above it. At present all is the vague surmise of ignorant people; for such in reality are the present magnates of Trinidad. It is said that quicksilver has been found near Port of Spain, but

this is very doubtful. Crystals of quartz used to be picked up near Fort George; and there is plenty of magnesian limestone and lignite. Bitumen abounds, and there is much stiff, tenacious clay; which is all that is known of the geology of the island. It therefore presents a wide field for investigation.

In some of the rivers on the eastern coast, particularly in the Orapouche, enormous water boas, called Huilla, are found. These formidable serpents suspend themselves from the trees overhanging the rivers, and drop upon whatever prey may pass beneath them. Dr. de Verteuil had the skin of one sent him by his brother, and it measured seventeen feet seven inches. The *Manati*, or river cow, is also common to the larger rivers. It is amphibious, coming ashore only at night to feed upon the herbage, and from its nocturnal habits it is very difficult to shoot.

About the middle of August, I started on another expedition in search of the Chorro, or Waterfall of Maraccas. This, be it remembered, was the rainy season, when a day—nay, even an hour's rain would convert purling streams into rushing torrents: so of course we made up our minds to a wetting. Our party consisted of four officers of the — regiment and myself.

We breakfasted, *à la fourchette*, at St. Joseph's, after which we pursued our order of march, three officers on horseback proceeding in advance, whilst the fourth, Mr. M——, drove me in a gig, as far as the road was practicable. We traversed once more the beautiful

valley, which developed an idiosyncrasy of character in our horse more remarkable than amusing, as he obstinately refused to ascend any rising ground until one of us got out, and when urged, only backed towards gutters, ditches, or precipices, in a way that induced us to comply with his wishes, in order to insure the safety of our necks. The rivers which we had to cross (six or seven bends of the same stream) were placid enough, though deeper than usual from the previous heavy rains. The brute would readily drive into the water for a yard or two, but would then stand still, answering every lash with a whisk of his tail, until we obtained the services of some passing negro to lead him across. When fairly through the stream, the road ascended almost as a matter of course, and then a scene of capering, tail-whisking, and backing to the river ensued, that was sufficiently provoking, and was only terminated by giving Nutmeg-grater his point. Once on level ground, he proceeded at a rapid pace, which left no room for complaint.

For some time, heavy showers had been traversing the distant plains of the Savanna Grande towards San Fernando ; and just as we reached the house fixed upon as a *point d'appui*, from whence we were to start on foot for the lateral valley of the Cascade, a smoking tropical shower of nearly an hour's duration threatened to bring the expedition to a premature close. Our horses were billeted in a shed, and we accepted the invitation of the *padrona di casa*, an old Spanish

dame, to join the family circle, a mongrel assemblage of black, brown, and lemon-colour. Some brandy being produced by way of sustaining ourselves under difficulties, and of comforting the inner man, the old Doña requested a share, sagely remarking: "Amo mucho el vino—mucho—mucho." All the family, black and white, with one consent declared, that we could not reach the Chorro that day, as the intervening river was impassable; and that in the previous year, a woman had been drowned in the attempt. We held a council of war, however, and the rain having ceased, four of us determined to brave fate, leaving our gallant Jehu, who was less eager in the enterprise, behind, he having been at the Fall only a few days before.

The well-trodden sinuosities that in dry weather did duty as paths, were now trenches filled with mud and water, and we waded along as philosophically and as rapidly as we could.

Traversing a cocoa-plantation on the right of the road, we gained the river at the usual ford, and found it rushing, rolling, and eddying fast and furious, swelling into billows, and whirling along a trail of gnarled roots or withered stems. We could no longer resist the conviction that for this day at least our journey was stopped; but before giving up, we sought by a *détour* through the cocoa-grove, to find some more practical point for crossing. We encountered a Spaniard at work, who told us that to cross anywhere was absolutely impossible, as the "Rio" was

“muy profundo.” However, we managed to get to the margin of the stream, and gazed once more on the rapid, roaring flood. Such a crackling as filled the air! The bamboos which fringed the banks came toppling down, and were swept away by wholesale. The long, straight poles, in their ostrich plumage, fell one after the other into the turbid water, crashing as they nodded to their fall, like the rafters of some burning house. They have so superficial a hold of the soil, that the least increase of height or velocity of the river will sweep them bodily off. Their fate warned us not to imperil ourselves; and much disappointed that we could not cross, we slowly retreated, wending our way back towards the first ford.

As we proceeded, we met a party going to the ford, a negro, his little son of six years, and a sleek young damsel of fifteen, his daughter, carrying on her head a tray of sundries. How the young ones were to get across the river we could not conjecture; and we awaited the result with considerable curiosity. The father, denuding himself to his drawers, coolly waded into the torrent, in order to test its power, and then returned to fetch the little urchin, who, nothing daunted, rushed in, and being instantly carried off his legs, was dragged through by the stalwart negro, and landed in safety on the opposite bank, though in the centre the current nearly upset them both. Assisted in the same way, the girl also got over; and of course our party prepared to follow. Being, however, rather diffident myself, I bribed the negro with a quarter of a

dollar to carry me across, which he readily engaged to do ; and I confess that when I found myself on his back in the centre of the flood, with the boiling, foaming waters all around, the sensation was far from an agreeable one. I was by no means sorry when pitched down dry on the opposite bank. The rest of our party resolutely waded across, bearing aloft certain indescribable garments ; and thus our first difficulty was overcome.

From the river to the cascade may be two miles. The greater portion of the way is up a mountain ; and as we proceeded, our path by no means improved, our legs being completely washed by the water that made its way down the inferior channels. Every bush was loaded with wet, and every tuft of grass was like a saturated sponge. We passed some negro provision grounds, and a few cottages, and began to mount the now *difficilis ascensus*, puffing, blowing, and silent, anon tripping over a stone, or straddling over the trunk of a tree. We crossed a miniature rill, and at last reached the Little Fall, a rocky ravine intersecting our path. From high above us a rush of water forced its way to the plains below, forming in itself a beautiful *chute*, by no means formidable under ordinary circumstances ; and at present our only anxiety was to get across as nearly dry-shod as might be, *i. e.*, not much more wetted than over the ankles. Two of the party scrambled over at once, leaving Captain S—— and myself to consider the best means of escaping a wetting, when, without any warning, a tremendous

shower came scuttling down upon us in a style only to be described as "raining cats and dogs." I had on a long-skirted macintosh, and Captain S—— held up an umbrella; but whilst we patiently waited until the violence of the shower should abate, the cascade increased so quickly, that what ten minutes before was only a question of mid-leg or so, became one of whether we could get over at all; I never before saw such a change in so short a time. However, as every moment would make it worse, Captain S—— pioneered, and by groping with the old umbrella amongst the rocks, and sounding the deepest pools, he succeeded in getting across, and nothing was left for me but to follow—an exploit not at all to my taste, especially as the torrent began to roar, and rush furiously over the rocks in a manner really alarming. Not without some risk of being swept into the profound depths below, did I push in, but once fairly launched, and feeling that come what might, I could not be wetter than I was, and being, moreover, ably abetted by the umbrella, I scrambled across, though not without the loss of the *parapluie*, which in the confusion went over the fall and was no more seen. However, it was only a borrowed one.

Our curiosity had been considerably stimulated by the exclamations of the two gentlemen who had preceded us, and who had taken advantage of our delay, to attain the point whence they could view the grand fall, and now came back full of admiration. All this time it was raining in torrents, with every prospect of

continuance, perhaps for the whole night. But this did not damp our ardour, and we set off briskly, pushing over the slippery clay-path as fast as we could. Suddenly we came on a sharp descent of some twenty feet down the bank, but by holding on to the neighbouring shrubs we got down without mishap, though a dislocated ankle had seemed inevitable. In one part we had to scramble over the fallen trunk of a tree, and in another to creep under one, breast high. Glad enough I was, when a shout announced that the terminus of all this discomfort was in view. I tried to look up, but for a time could see nothing. The rain was pelting with tropical violence into my eyes: I heard the rushings of a furious wind, and blasts of water dashed in irregular jets in my face. Then I became aware that it was the spray of the fall mingled with the rain, and I managed to ascertain my whereabouts. It must be understood that this was far from representing the ordinary state of the waterfall, and that clouds of spray and rain rendered it extremely difficult to determine distances.

On the opposite side of a ravine of indefinite height and width, but towering majestically upwards, a torrent of water was shooting in rockets of white foam over a ledge of rock, whence it leapt madly down. I could just discern a wall of rock, fringed with bushes, and one apparent twig, which I was told was a tree of large dimensions. I should doubt the fall being half the height that the dense aerial perspective would have led one to imagine, and should have guessed it at eighty

or one hundred feet, but it is said that it measures three hundred and twenty. I was told that the fall was more magnificent now than our party had ever before seen it, and even since their first view a few moments before, it had increased to double its previous dimensions. The wind blowing furiously through the chasm, and the rain pouring down without cessation, rendered it extremely difficult to see any distance, and after a rapid survey, we were not sorry to retreat. As ordinarily seen, the Chorro di Maraccas is a thin stream of water, falling from a great height, until lost in spray like the Staubbach at Lauterbrunnen. It is fed by a lake on the top of the mountain, which is very difficult of access.

We had now to get back as we best might. The pelting pitiless rain still rattled upon our backs; and we were perched nearly at the top of a mountain, bemired, soaked and footsore. The path was a mere ledge of slippery clay, and after going a short distance, it seemed impossible to proceed. We reclinced our twenty feet backward, by holding on to whatever roots we could clutch; but when up, we trudged back to the smaller fall, now a roaring, leaping, impassable torrent, which would carry away an elephant. Here, therefore, we were brought to a stand, with the persuasion that we must only stay quietly until it subsided, of which, at this moment, there was no promise. In wet weather each wild plantain-leaf forms an aqueduct, so that if you get under the end of one, a respectable *douche* bath is the result; I happened to halt beneath the

broad middle of a large leaf, and that formed a trifling shelter. My friends disposed of themselves in various ways, each contributing to illustrate that forlorn condition immortalized by "Jack" in a gale of wind, called the sailor's comfort, *i. e.*, to sit in the lee of the long boat, with a wet stocking round your neck.

High above our heads roared the turbulent flood, each angry gush, as it took its leap, wrestling for precedence with its neighbour, and showing what would be our fate if carried over into the appalling chasm below. For half an hour we remained in serious doubt, as to whether the passage could be achieved that evening, or whether we should not be compelled to remain where we were; and the prospect of a night in the woods, without food or fire, exposed to such a rain, was anything but agreeable. At last the rain began to break, and the atmosphere to clear, and after a time the torrent, no longer swelled by the rain, assumed a less formidable appearance. A stout, tall sapling was hewn down; and though the fall was still dangerous, one of our party was adventurous enough to take the lead, poking in the deep holes, and plunging first one leg, and then the other, into the water, using hands as well as feet, and so staggered with uncertain footing across. One by one we followed, and providentially all got over in safety. We had been detained the better part of an hour, but now were on the high road for food and shelter; and however rough the way, we trudged merrily down, and soon arrived at the river. This, as we had feared, was much swollen, but we

again enlisted the services of a negro, who happened to be at hand. I mounted his back, and he carried me over with little difficulty, being steadied by my weight. In returning, however, to render assistance to the others, who were wading across, he was more than once all but carried off his legs. The waders had to struggle for it manfully, and each, in spite of his efforts, was swept down a few yards. The torrent rushing over rocky ground formed billows of no mean force; but, at length, all got safely over, and were soon comfortably bestowed at the house of the Spanish lady.

By this time, what with rain, rivers and mud, we were thoroughly knocked up, and wet through, though we had six miles to go before we could hope for a change of clothes—a dangerous thing in the West Indies. However, there was no remedy, and we had only to lose as little time as possible.

The old Señora expressed how delighted she should be at seeing us again, begging us on our next visit to bring “mucho vino” (there had been in our absence a bottle of Madeira, and divers other *bebandas* in circulation), and with a courteous “Vaya usted con Dios,” we took our leave. We quickly reached river the first, now swollen and raging. The equestrians passed over with only a little struggling of the horses, and we in the gig drove four or five yards from the steep bank into a deep hole, into which rushed the full force of the torrent; and there, as before, our horse stopped, and when urged, would only move down the stream, ren-

dering our situation very critical. Captain —— galloped off for assistance, whilst Captain S—— gallantly dashed in, and breast-high, struggled across the river to our rescue, coming to our side to hold up the vehicle by the wheel. Lieutenant B—— followed his example, and stationed himself at the other wheel with the same laudable object. Suddenly the back of the horse began to disappear, and the gig to heel over, on which Captain S—— exclaimed: “By Jove, he’s going down! hold him up for God’s sake, or you will be lost!” That there was danger now could not be doubted, as we were in the deepest part of the angry rolling flood, which impetuously rushed over the bottom of the vehicle. We managed, however, to hold the horse steadily up, though puffing, blowing, and almost gasping, with his nose just clearing the surface.

At this moment, a crowd of people appeared on the opposite bank, embracing the whole population of the village—men, women and children—who had all turned out to our assistance. Some essayed to fling ropes to us, all which of course fell short; while others, in tones and language impossible to be understood, vociferated to us at the top of their voices, and the women motioned and gesticulated in a manner no one could comprehend. For a time matters looked extremely serious, but we two in the gig had nothing left for it but to sit still, being without means of assisting ourselves. Presently, however, a Spaniard, stripped to the drawers, and offering one of the noblest specimens of the human form that I ever saw, dashed

in, rope in hand, and wrestled with the stream until sufficiently near to fling the end of a rope to me, which I made fast, and he then hauled himself over to us. A stout negro followed, and posted himself near the head of the horse, which seemed to give the poor beast confidence, as from that moment he stood quite quiet.

We sat, meanwhile, bolt upright in the drag, our feet resting on the leathern apron in front, to be out of the way of the water, which laved the bottom. Mr. M——, enveloped in a drab Codrington, buttoned up to the throat, held the horse as stiffly as the reins would permit, and I remained quite passive, being assured that the best thing I could do was not to attempt anything. Holding up our starboard wheel stood Captain S——, up to the breast of his white jacket in the river, and looking pale and anxious, but withal remarkably cool. On my side stood Lieutenant B——, similarly occupied, and in front was the huge negro, while the herculean Spaniard, rope in hand, waited to take advantage of the first favourable moment for action, and the groups on the banks were in clamorous consultation as to what had best be done to relieve us. In this situation did we remain rather more than half an hour, looking, I suspect, rather foolish ; but at length it was determined on shore that we must get out of the drag, and make our way to the bank as we best could. I immediately found myself breast high in the water, and assisted by Captain S——, I, with a few half gyrations, waded to the bank, and got safely on shore on the *wrong* side of the river,

which of course had to be recrossed. Being taken in tow, however, by the Spaniard and a second negro, that also was effected, though not without my swimming a few strokes to lighten the labour. Mr. M—— followed me, similarly assisted; and the horse, having a rope fastened to his head-gear, was then pulled over by sundry volunteers on the banks. All hands were now safe. Our deliverers were duly *premiado*, and a bottle of cognac from a neighbouring store dispelled the cold within, of which circulating medium the Spaniard, with a “Yo soy muy fria” (I am very cold), claimed his share—a claim that was most readily and thankfully acknowledged.

I was informed by the storekeeper of the village, who actually trembled with excitement, that only an hour or two before, two men had been all but drowned in attempting the passage of the river. The next bend was only a hundred yards distant; and “This,” said she, “you cannot pass. Ce n’est pas possible, Monsieur. El rio tiene mucho corriente—de hos—yes sar—ma de gig—it cannot—you mos stay here.” This news was far from encouraging, and on our arrival at the spot, things certainly looked blacker there than ever. I declined making the passage in the gig, which was consequently vacated; but the same sturdy Tritons forced the dogged horse *de faire son possible*, and drag the gig through. Captain McG—— kindly sent over his horse for me, and the gallant animal bore his rider, myself, waving the brandy bottle aloft, safely across, as if he were the Hippus of the stream. When

we were over, the villagers, taking their leave, returned to their homes, and we were left to cross the other four or five rivers by our own exertions. Fortunately these were only minor bends, and every moment the flood was subsiding. Nevertheless, in each our horse essayed the same trick, and in all Mr. M—— was compelled to jump out of the gig, up to his waist in water, to lead the vicious animal to the opposite bank.

It got dark just as we achieved the last bend of this, to us, *malignus fluvius*; but a short drive brought us to St. Joseph's, where a change of clothes, which each had providentially provided, and drinking the oddest *mélange* of everything that we could get—ale, wine and brandy, all done on the principle of expelling the enemy, fever—wound up our adventurous day.

With a fresh horse in the gig, and a bottle of Madeira, of which we now and then took a draught, by way of defiance to fever, we contrived to reach St. James's by nine o'clock, quite as fresh as when we set out in the morning, and feeling highly indebted to the gallantry of Captain S—— and Lieutenant B—— in coming forward so promptly, and standing in their unpleasant position so long, to effect our rescue from a very dangerous situation. Fortunately we all escaped any serious consequences from our incessant wettings, and the next morning found us assembled at breakfast, nearly as well as ever.

We were subsequently given to understand that our danger in this excursion had been greater than we at the time conceived, as in the event of the gig having

gone over, we should have been carried down and dashed against some concealed rock, and most probably have been drowned.

I slept at the garrison, but this was to be a day of adventures, and we had an earthquake in the night. I was sleeping soundly enough, after a full participation of the good things, liquids and solids, which most regimental messes can boast, when I was aroused by the shock. The double quiver was very perceptible, creating an intuitive conviction that it really was an earthquake, and nothing else. Having no fears *here*, I quickly went to sleep again. Some of the officers heard the rumbling, though I did not; but no one was alarmed, although in the town, the cowardly burghers of that ilk rushed out of their bed-rooms in an agony of ludicrous apprehension.

The deep subterranean passages, which would seem to perforate the internal structure of the earth, from the centre upwards, and into which galleries the gases, engendered by heat, pour themselves, must of necessity have a vent at those points where they come the nearest to the surface, and which consequently are the weakest and least able to bear the pressure: so they disrupt. Hence the fact of certain localities being the scenes of repeated disasters, whilst neighbouring cities are merely shaken; so that a shock which would merely shake Oporto, might overturn Lisbon; or one might create only a sensation at St. Vincent or Trinidad, whilst it broke up Guadaloupe or Caraccas. This theory is, I think, fully borne out by the facts, especially evident

in Calabria, as very many cities there, though sensibly feeling the explosive power of the pent-up gases, have never had a catastrophe, whilst only a few miles off the inhabitants have been repeatedly swallowed up. But the inhabitants of the Tropics, British or creole, are lamentably ignorant of natural phenomena. No one fears earthquakes in Great Britain or Germany, but who does *not* fear them in Calabria or Messina, Mexico or Lima?

CHAPTER XII.

DOMESTIC PLAGUES—EFFECTS OF CLIMATE—THE CRAPEAU—
INDOLENCE AND INSOLENCES OF NEGROES—VISIT TO GARTH—
PLANTATION LIFE—ST. ANNE'S—LORD HARRIS—BACHELOR'S
BALL.

EVERY day develops something curious and peculiar in these islands. We have the detonating chestnut, the shell of which explodes and sends the fruit flying several yards, startling a novice into the belief that some one is taking the liberty of pelting him with chestnuts: then comes the milk-tree, which, on being bruised or broken, exudes a fluid in every way analogous to animal milk.

One morning I saw on the stone pavement of the city, a snake, though it was only four inches long, and as thick as a garden-worm. This little reptile, however, was said to have fangs, and made abortive attempts to bite a stick. These are the things which make one feel far a-field.

Few in England can picture to themselves how

disgusting a race negroes are ; their horrible avarice and fearful tempers, their pride and vanity, from whatever source they can spring, are something altogether beyond our comprehension. A foreign friend lent me his house for a few weeks, attached to which was a coloured female domestic, named " Liddy " (Lydia, I presume) ; this name my friend had, in his foreign English, transmogrified into " Ladie," which gentlewomanly appellative is peculiarly grateful to the negresses ; and I quickly found that the demand for " Liddy " was scarcely attended to, and that it was good policy to retain the foreign pronunciation of " Lady," to which a response was cheerfully made, with a muttered commentary from her sable acquaintances : " You hear ? he call you ' Ladie ! ' " After the second day, however, I found my attendant very *nonchalant*, without, at first, being able to divine the reason of the change. " He call me ? he mos call ; I about my own affairs," reached my ear ; so I took the earliest opportunity of informing the fair creature that whatever services she might render me, would be paid for ; and from that moment all went on as well as things do with negroes in general, *i. e.*, she condescended to do what was to be done at her own leisure, making the bed, and clearing away the breakfast things *towards* the evening. Any remark upon this, would only have subjected me to an impertinent answer. This woman frequented a conventicle, and had had her *amour propre* sorely wounded by her master, from his not having consulted her upon matters with which she had

nothing to do. "I eight years wid him, and he no tell me! But dere is a Jeho-*via* above; Gād is a *just man*, yes, he a just man; he know ebery ting." Such are the advantages which these people have derived from religious instruction.

For three weeks there had been intensely hot weather; the rains did not seem to cool or freshen the atmosphere. Between the pelting showers the wind dropped, and the heat was suffocating. Bathed in perspiration night and day, the system begins sensibly to weaken; and one flies for relief to stimulants, generally weak brandy and water. Of course the relief so afforded is only temporary, and hence comes the danger of living in the West Indies, as it requires all the efforts of one's reason to guard against indulgence in an occasional glass, from becoming an inveterate habit. So delightful is the draught—so thorough the prostration of strength!

With very many people, the excitement of wine or of spirits is never fully allowed to subside. The system becomes fevered, the eyes blood-shot, the hands tremble, the liver is deranged, and a fearful and often fatal bilious attack is the result. Every habit of the country is against temperance; in every house you enter, some liquid refreshment is tendered, and usually pressed upon you, followed by a series of jokes, and of *badinage* if you refuse. In nine cases out of ten, the offer is but too tempting to be declined; and the anticipated draught is quaffed with avidity, and few indeed entirely escape the consequences.

This overwhelming weather also produced the prickly heat to a most uncomfortable extent, causing a general irritation of habit, which, more or less, extends itself to the mind. Somehow or other, the heats within the Tropics never seemed to me so fierce and scorching as during the summer in Florence or Catania; but they melt one more, and, being continuous, they are far more debilitating, gradually causing a degree of lassitude that predisposes one to receive any malady that local circumstances might be likely to generate. Laugh, as one generally will do at first, at all this, the climate does very soon begin to tell upon one; though in Trinidad, one is close to a climate as renovating as that of England. Leon de Caraccas, on the Spanish Main, a city three thousand four hundred feet above the sea, is exceedingly salubrious; and there is still loftier land to retreat to, if occasion require.

About the middle of September, I paid a visit to Mount Steuart Estate, North Naparima. I went by steamer to San Fernando, where I found horses sent down to convey myself and a German friend to the house. It was on this little journey, of six miles only, that I first became sensible of the extent of the debility into which I had fallen, as the effect of the extreme heat of the city. The prickly heat had made my skin as tender and sensitive as that of an infant, as I found to my cost after riding a mile or two; for, although we were an hour on our journey, I arrived at my destination with a deplorable loss of strength, and in excruciating pain,

and so knocked up by the exertion, as to be obliged to go to bed at seven P.M., rising only at seven next morning. I was incapable of any exercise, mental or physical, the whole of the next day. This was, after a residence of ten months in the West Indies, my first shock from the climate.

It may be as well here to add, that, in two cases which came under my notice, a fit of ague immediately followed the stupid mode, common to the West Indies, of soaking in a sarcophagus of cold water, by way of bath. To any reasonable being, the wonder is that the bathers ever escape, as the whole system receives a sudden chill, while there is no means of procuring a reaction. In most instances, the bathers walk out of the bath into a room, and sit quietly down, very often in a draught. The creoles, as a body, are lamentably ignorant, whilst the majority of Europeans come out so young, and from such an inferior class of society at home, that their knowledge seldom exceeds that of the natives.

From San Fernando towards the mission of Savanna Grande, the country is beautifully undulating; and from the front of Mr. P. C——'s house, built on a hill, the view looking north is extremely pretty. Immediately in front, the canes are thickly planted on what might be termed huge billows of land, so much does it "roll" at this distance. The cane patches look like coarse bristling grass; and I really cannot see anything picturesque about them, save, perhaps, the colour, which is of the brightest green, and is any-

thing but a desirable predominating colour in a picture. Half a mile beyond, commences the primeval forest—dark and gloomy enough. This extends to the Mount Serrat Hills, which would bound the view, but that we see the grey tops of the mountains above St. Joseph's lifting themselves above the wooded heights. To the left lies the Gulf of Paria, and immediately under us are a cluster of white negro huts, the homes of the labourers on the estate, as long as they choose to stay. Altogether in this view, were it not for a few cabbage-palms scattered here and there, and the predominance of black skins, there would be nothing to indicate that we are not in a European country. The change of temperature is astonishing, there being a difference of at least fifteen degrees between this place and Port of Spain.

As much has been written *pro et con* on the subject of the venom of frogs and toads, I am tempted to state what lately took place in this house. On the evening preceding my arrival, as Mr. P. C——, and Mr. M——, his manager—were enjoying the *fresco* on the door-steps, a little Scotch terrier, a capital rat-hunter, gave chase to a huge *crapeau*, as the enormous frogs are called here. “Ah!” remarked Mr. C——, “if that’s a *crapeau*, the dog will be blinded.” Scarcely was this uttered when a fearful squeal in the guinea-grass attracted their attention; and on going to the spot, they found the poor dog apparently in the last agonies, or, as they described it, in a fit. Several pails of water were immediately thrown over it,

and it was conveyed to the house. On examining it, I found that one eye was seriously affected ; and at some risk of being bitten (for the poor thing was much irritated), I bathed the eye with water. But it gradually got worse, and filled with mucus ; and I afterwards discovered the sight of that eye at least was lost. The fact of the crapeau blinding animals, by ejecting a corrosive liquid, is thoroughly established throughout the country. This reptile is often seven inches long by four broad, and hops along so fast, as to be exceedingly difficult to overtake.

The planters make dire complaints of the ruinous consequences of admitting slave-grown sugar into England at the same duty as that of the British Colonial. The high wages of the negroes and their utter independence of labour for any but themselves, with their laziness and insolence, render it utterly impossible in the majority of the planters to cover their expenses ; and they talk of turning their estates into provision grounds. Indeed, the last *coup* to the ruin of the planters seems to have been given by the mad colonial policy of the mother country.

The *dolce far niente* of Naples is prompt activity compared with the indolence of the negroes. I never witnessed elsewhere anything like it : indeed, it is incomprehensible to all who have not been in the West Indies. Strapping negro wenches, thrice as strong as any European female, will scarcely take the trouble to move, except to receive money. " How you think I can do dis ? what you tink I made of ? " " No

matter," said Dr. — to me, "however much prejudiced a person may come out in favour of the negroes, or may have believed them to have been wronged, or to be capable of improvement; no sooner does he see the innate brutality of their natures, and their fiendish, malignant, and vindictive dispositions, than he changes his tone for one of utter disgust." Horses and other animals dread them; as do even their own children, on all of whom, if offended by others, they will wreak their vengeance, and once beginning, they never know when to leave off. Though quickly enough corrupted by the bad examples of the Africans, the coolies are far better. At Mount Steuart there were several of these Asiatics, and they showed great regard for each other. "Dis man," said one to me, "he lame arm (sprained), he no can work—he good man—good—good;" patting the poor fellow on the back. This gang took great pride in their gardens, which were very carefully cultivated, and produced Indian corn, sweet potatoes, and other tropical vegetables. They spent their leisure in drumming and singing; sometimes, however, quarrelling with the negroes, whom they hate, and to whom they hold themselves much superior. A fight between the two races is a most ludicrous spectacle; for the physical inferiority of the Hindoo, is amply compensated by his superior strategy, and a well-organized combination amongst themselves. Whilst one is engaged stick to stick with a negro, another will creep between the legs of his countryman and pull his antagonist down. It

usually requires white interference to put an end to the fray. On the estates, the coolies seldom wear more than the *dhooty* round the loins; but when their Asiatic traps are worn out, they look excessively droll in a shepherd's brindled Codrington, and probably a Lowland Scotch cap. Few coolies pass you on the road without giving you the salaam. If the negro condescend to notice you at all in Trinidad, it will usually be a nod on the strict equality principle, which impertinent sort of salutation it is good policy not to return. Major T—— was obliged to threaten one of the garrison servants with martial law, for not saluting properly when he met his officer. This same insolent black was in the service of the Governor at St. Anne, where he boasted that "in one week he would break every regulation of the house," beginning by getting himself excused from morning prayers on the plea of its being his only opportunity of "visiting and assisting his poor sick mother." This was admitted, but on the truly excellent Governor sending to make inquiries, with the view of contributing his assistance to the poor old woman, it was discovered that the mother had been dead for years. He was dismissed, and wound up his career by getting service at the barracks, robbing the officers, and absconding.

I rode over to Garth, Mr. Taylor's estate. The house stands on an isolated hill, in the midst of a beautiful little valley, and every rising ground is covered with canes. From Mount Steuart to Garth

the roads were bad, beyond anything that description could convey to an Englishman; the soil being a red, tenacious clay, so honeycombed by being traversed, that at each plunge the horse went up to his knees into a regular plug-hole, bespattering his rider with mud from head to foot; to guide him was out of the question, as, from practice, the cautious animal had a far better idea of the *modus operandi* than his rider, and the only thing left was to stick on his back and give him *carte blanche*. Curious as it may seem, to walk over such a road would have amounted to an impossibility to any but a negro, or a bare-legged peon. I was anxious to get to the Mission of Savanna Grande. But at this season it was too serious an undertaking; besides that, such few of the aborigines as remain are now scattered in the woods, from whence they only emerge to sell game, or grass hammocks; so that I might have gone fifty times without catching a glimpse of one. Those of pure blood scarcely exist, as they have intermarried with the Spanish peons. They seem to have entirely given up the Roman Catholic religion, and returned to heathenism, or something like it. A Romish church and a priest, however, still remain.

These woods abound in game, the quank (peccory, or wild-hog), the lap, the kirtchecom, or armadillo,* the maracoi (land-turtle), deer, porcupine, manacou and agouti; but it is very difficult to obtain any when required, though, perhaps, in a day or two after, every

* I can only give the local names.

house will be glutted ; the uncertain supplies being entirely dependent on the caprice, or luck of the Indians. The lap, quank, and deer, commit great devastations amongst the sugar-canes and corn-pieces ; for which, occasionally, their carcasses, *cuisiné*, make some reparation.

I got back to Mount Steuart in time to witness a droll mode of ejecting the Jack-Spaniards, towards which dangerous neighbours it requires some coolness to affect indifference : dressing with half-a-dozen mammoth hornets, each armed with a terrible sting, hovering about one ! Mr. L—— loaded a gun with powder only, and blew into atoms the infinity of nests and their inhabitants, pendant from the roof and corners of the house. The survivors, thus summarily ejected, were in consequence extremely unsettled and dangerous. When flying they appear to be enormous, from having two long, gawky legs stretched out below them, like those of a stork on the wing.

I heard sad complaints from the wives of the planters of their imprisonment to the estate ; nay, indeed, almost to their own houses ! In the wet season, from the roads being quite impassable to a female, they are necessarily prevented from visiting even a neighbouring estate, whilst in crop time their husbands cannot spare time to go with them ; so that, perhaps, with good luck, a visit a mile off may be achieved once a-year ! The only way for the wife of a planter to get female society is to have her sisters in the house, or (more

agreeable to the gentleman) female cousins. In these islands, the dwellings of the planters are mere Scotch farm-houses, subject to all the inconveniences of a rude state of society. There is enough to eat, if you can eat it: salt-fish, which taints the air with the effluvia of a *Latrine*, is the staple dish. This, from habit, all here seem to like, though it is generally uneatable to a stranger. Boiled yams—between a potato and a turnip—they readily devour, and sometimes sweet fried plantains. Fresh fish, when it can be got so far in the country, is very good; but roasted meats, or fowls, are always so impregnated with the pyroligneous acid of the wood-fire, as to have a smoky, or baked taste, well known to all travellers in the Highlands of Scotland. Worcestershire sauce is now beginning to be used; but usually, the only condiment beyond pepper and salt, will be a bottle of pickled peppers. Greens, or salads, are rarely seen, and pastry, or fruits, form no part of an ordinary West-Indian dinner. Wine, porter and English cheese form the wind-up, with cigars and brandy-and-water *ad libitum*. This is the common routine of a planter's house. By nine o'clock at night, and often before, all are in bed.

Amongst themselves, there is a very free-and-easy mode of visiting. A planter about to travel, after taking a cup of coffee at home, sets off soon after day-break, and rides until breakfast-time, when he dismounts at the first planter's house to which he may come, with an "I've come to breakfast with

you," after which meal he, *sans cérémonie*, mounts again and is off, transacts his business, and, on his return, he much in the same way stops on the road to dine. There is generally rude plenty; but it is often so rude, as to be all but impracticable to a civilized man. Fortunately, from the early-acquired habits of the majority of planters, emanating, as they do, from Highland-sheilings, or farm-houses, this is not felt.

From the effects of climate, as well as from the want of care of the people, everything about the building, shed or gate, usually looks as dilapidated as any part of Castle Rack-rent. The out-buildings are invariably wretched hovels, giving to everything and everybody an air of poverty, which is not always indicative of the purses of the owners. The *Latrinæ* are invariably singular specimens of a negro's idea of comfort; the arrangements being usually most ludicrously inconvenient, whilst, as a general rule, throughout the establishment, hinges are minus, doors refuse to lock, and bolts are wanting; so that, in consequence of the impossibility of duly securing anything, habits of carelessness are engendered, which act as temptations to plunder. It is hardly, indeed, reasonable to expect that the laws of *meum et teum* should be rigidly observed, where, from the absence of all precaution, everything seems to be so much in common.

I was very desirous of reaching some mud volcanoes, called the Devil's Woodyard, seven or eight miles beyond the Mission of Savanna Grande; but the roads

were absolutely impassable. There are several groups of these singular formations scattered about Trinidad, whilst the ground about North Naparima and San Fernando is redolent of mineral pitch.

I returned to San Fernando, greatly benefitted by a sojourn of ten days in a comparatively cool atmosphere. The wretched inn at San Fernando belongs to one Phillips, a mulatto boatman, formerly a slave, who usually engrosses the lion's share of the passengers from the steamer to the shore ; and although sufficiently civil to customers, is, as may be supposed, extremely ignorant. Such is mulatto pride, that upon one occasion, when the large room in his tavern had been employed for some public meeting, a coloured writer reporting the proceedings for the newspapers, dated his despatch from Phillips's Hotel, which drew forth from Phillips a warlike missive to the following effect :

“ I have repeatedly warned you of this ; but if you again repeat such impertinence, it will be a matter of ‘ hair-triggers’ between us, as I am as much entitled to be called *Esquire* as any one on the island.”

Had I not seen St. Anne, the residence of the Governor, I should have left Trinidad with a very imperfect idea of its capabilities, when directed by the eye of taste. Lord Harris, the Governor, had converted an impracticable shabby wooden house, imprisoned in trees, into a rural paradise, by clearing away the gloomy arborescent barriers which impeded the view, opening vistas, and laying out to the greatest possible advantage every point susceptible of improve-

ment. This made it appear the *beau-idéal* of an English gentleman's park, with all the vegetable adjuncts of the Tropics. Immediately in front lies the Royal Savannah, or Government Park, a magnificent meadow of two hundred and seventeen acres, as flat as a lawn, but elegantly diversified by clumps of trees, amongst which graze innumerable cows. Beyond rises the home-recalling spire of the Episcopal church, the whole bounded by the Gulf of Paria, over whose placid bosom glides the swift felucca, or the lofty ship. The grounds immediately surrounding the ugliest house in Trinidad are laid out with an agreeable variety of lofty trees, lovely parterres of flowers and secluded walks, added to which is a delightful novelty—immense cages, inhabited by various specimens of local zoology, combining the interest of a Zoological Garden with the elegancies of Flora, and the advantages of a botany selected for its usefulness. At stated periods the whole is thrown open to the public.

It is astounding how greatly the general effect is aided by such tropical specimens as the screw-pine, the mountain-cabbage, palm, cocoa-nut-tree, aloe, and the numerous varieties of the cactus tribe. The *boismortelle*, with its dark green leaves and bright scarlet flowers, followed by an infinity of curious shrubs far beyond my limited acquaintance to define, are grouped on every side. Behind the house rises an isolated hill, crowned by a capacious kiosk, commanding a really exquisite view of the mountains which encircle this beautiful spot. Amongst the animals and *reptiliae*, are

an oncelet from the Main, and a Trinidad monkey, with a dark mahogany-coloured coat, and coal-black face, which are exceedingly rare, inasmuch as though they are often shot, the obtuse people here scarcely ever think of catching a living specimen. Then came a marvellous fine *gymnotus* or electrical eel, four feet long, a tapir, several peccory, ("quanks," or wild hogs), lapa, and a host of birds and beasts, with three fine serpents, one of which was a powerful boa constrictor.

A number of boys employed about the house, negroes, Portuguese, and one Hindoo, sons of labourers on the estate, are carefully instructed in the elementary branches of education and in religion, under a school-master employed for the purpose at the expense of the Governor. The boys are not paid upon the ordinary principle of wages, but according to the number of prize-tickets which they can obtain for diligence, merit, and general good conduct at school. The Portuguese boys, though exceedingly docile and intelligent, do not take so well to learning: neither will the coolie boy, though by far the quickest and most clever of the whole; but the duller Africans imbibe their learning better. This is easily accounted for, as the mere acquirement of knowledge is an act of memory, unbiased by judgment or general talent. However this may be, the experiment so conducted is an interesting one. I ought to mention that one little girl, the daughter of a domestic, is also a participator in these educational advantages.

The botanical and horticultural gardens attached to

St. Anne's, are under the superintendence of a botanist and his assistant, selected from home, and paid by the British Government. Mr. Purdie, the principal, is extremely intelligent, and well acquainted with the Flora of South America, having spent four years travelling over the Spanish Main in the employ of the British Horticultural Society.

From the astuteness, untiring energy, and unlimited liberality of his Excellency Lord Harris, joined to his unblemished moral character, and an universally admitted desire to forward the best interests of the colony, no more fitting person could have been selected to control the heterogeneous and wayward materials that compose the population of Trinidad. There is one fatal drawback, however, to the interests of all these colonies: it is that, for any individual, the period of government is limited to five years; so that all the improvements in progress may receive a sudden check from the unworthiness or incapacity of a successor. Far better would it be, if, whilst an unworthy governor were liable to be deposed at a month's notice, he who governs wisely, like this young nobleman, were eligible to be continued for an indefinite period. In Trinidad the government allowance is so small, that instead of making the office a mere pretext for receiving a salary for a given number of years, as so many have done, Lord Harris, during his government, expended in addition, the whole of his private fortune, out of which he established prizes in agriculture, and adopted measures for the spread of education, bestowing re-

wards for diligence in study, and in every way sustaining the public respectability. His hospitality was unbounded, though his guests, apprehensive that it may be supposed they are not familiar with Lords, not unfrequently addressed him as "Sir ;" whilst written communications to him in his character of governor from utter strangers, often commenced with "My dear Sir !"

As in most communities, however, I found that even here there are a select few, gentlemen and gentlewomen, properly educated and accomplished, but very exclusive, keeping carefully apart from the *profanum vulgus*. Had I not been admitted into this mystic circle, I should have left Trinidad with an impression that it was the most selfish and vulgar community on earth.

As an instance of negro impudence, I may mention a most amusing incident. While I was in Trinidad, it was determined to give a bachelor's ball ; and the professional band of Port of Spain (all black and coloured) positively refused to play for white people, on the ground that it would be derogatory to them to do so. Though probably not one of them could read or write, they considered themselves not merely equal, but *superior* to the whites. In England, this would be deemed ridiculous ; but here, it is a matter on which serious consequences depend, as such sentiments pervade all the black and coloured classes, making them exceedingly insolent and insubordinate.

Notwithstanding the strike of the band, the ball

took place, a *bonus* of two hundred dollars (forty pounds) having sufficiently mollified a huge mulatto and his son to condescend to lead an amateur orchestra, each of whom, however, on this occasion got pay. The music, though of the humblest character, answered the purpose pretty well ; and we had quadrilles, waltzes, and the polka again and again renewed. There was a very good show of well-dressed and pretty girls, some of whom, with that intuitive creole feeling for this amusement, danced very well. I call the feeling intuitive, because some of the very best female dancers in the room had never received a lesson. The majority of the ladies were shopkeepers, and, with two or three exceptions, the most vulgar females present were English. The greater part of the men were "gents." The supper was very good ; and the night wound up with a most impudent attempt on the part of the rascally mulatto leader, who had been so overpaid, to put an end to the ball at three A.M. by playing the people out with "God save the Queen." The impertinence was however overruled by the threat of stopping his pay.

The worst feature of this ball, was a room devoted to gambling (*petit paquet*, or blind hookey), at which several large sums changed hands, one of the principal winners being a clerk in the office of the Ordnance storekeeper, who afterwards embezzled the public money, and absconded. Another guest stole my *Maracaibo* hat !

CHAPTER XIII.

CONDITION OF SOCIETY—MOUNT BLANC—LORD HARRIS'S SCHOOL
—NEGRO CHARACTERISTICS—SOJOURN AT ST. ANNE'S.

“THERE is no pleasure in living within the Tropics,” said the highest official authority in Trinidad to me; and when the novelty of the tropical vegetation has once worn off, it is quite true. If such be the opinion of one, who from position can command all the *agréments* of tropical life with many of those of Europe, what must be the feeling of less privileged persons? The great drawback is, doubtless, the want of congenial society, independent enough to state their opinions plainly, and thus give that zest to conversation, without which social intercourse has little value; whilst the incessant quarrels of the coloured people, their furious tempers, fiendish passions, and unmitigated knavery, becomes at last so wearisome, that one longs to escape. Every street of Port of Spain rings

with their loud bawling eternal recriminations. The negroes swear in a most disgusting manner, and oaths of the most profane character seem to float on the very air; and the negresses are every whit as bad. In fact, all the foulest expressions of Billingsgate are in common and familiar use among both sexes.

I rode with Mr. C. W——, the Attorney-General, his son, and Mr. Purday, the botanist, up a mountain at the back of St. Anne's, in hopes of reaching a natural savannah, called Mount Blanc. These natural savannahs on the slopes of mountains are very unaccountable arrangements of nature. At a certain spot, the forest on every side ceases, enclosing a space on which no sort of tree, or even a bush encroaches, but which is covered with a long coarse grass.

We were unable to attain our object, in consequence of the extreme fatigue of making one's way along the crest of the ridge, through the peculiar impediments of a tropical forest. Even as it was, the cutlass was in incessant requisition; in many places the fearful grugrus had fallen across the track, and stout vegetable loops caught the hoofs of our horses, or, like halters, hung down ready to catch our necks. The incessant dodging, to avoid these traps, and the necessity of maintaining an Argus-like watchfulness, with the thermometer at 86°, was very fatiguing. We tied up our horses, and proceeded some distance on foot, and at length obtained, as compensation, a fine view of Port of Spain and the Gulf. Here, for the first time, I saw a wild monkey, at least three feet high, and of a

bright sandy-red. He was weighing up the branches of a tree very deliberately, as if feeling secure in his unapproachable position.

In returning we found it safer to walk three parts of the way down, as two of the horses were quite lamed by the thorns of the gru-gru, and we were ourselves sadly pestered by a little wretch called the *bête rouge*, which penetrating the boot, buried itself in the skin about the feet and instep, producing an intolerable itching in its efforts to burrow a nidus in one's flesh. This insect is invisible to the naked eye, although the inflammation producing a red spot like a flea-bite is apparent enough. The antidote is to irritate the skin with a hair-brush, in order to bring the *bête* to the surface, and then to touch him up with sweet-oil, a most effectual death to all the insect tribes.

Contrary to the prevailing opinion in England, respecting the lovely plumage of humming-birds, they are, as seen flitting about from flower to flower, of so dark a bottle-green as to seem black, and the real beauty of their plumage, whatever it may be, is in no way visible. I have watched dozens of them, and never could catch the slightest variation of colour. The humming noise, caused by the vibration of their wings, is by no means universal; indeed, up to this date, I have only heard it once. As a rule, much of that which is peculiar to the Tropics must be sought for; all that has been described by travellers exists, but it reveals itself only slowly and accidentally. Some trees, however, are so peculiar in their forms as at once to strike

the most superficial observer. The screw pine (*Pandanus utilis*), and another variety, the *Pandanus candelabrum* are immediately distinguishable; but when once you have seen the varieties of the palm tribe, as the banana, the cactus, pawpaw and the aloe, the rest are not so remarkable as to rivet the eye, though peculiar enough on a close investigation. Taking into consideration the heat, reptiles, insects and thorns, the Tropics are as much felt as seen. The bitings, stings, and fearful gashes in one's drapery, are much more tangible than agreeable.

On the 21st of November, I had been twelve months in the West Indies without experiencing any sickness. A tranquil mind, however, is a great preservative. It is astonishing how many of the serious illnesses, nay deaths, which take place within the Tropics may be traced to fits of passion. People here live high, and it wants but an exciting cause to effect a total derangement of the frame.

I paid a visit of several weeks' duration to St. Anne's, the residence of the Governor, where I found English, Irish, Portuguese, African negroes, and one cooly, employed as domestics. The result was incessant quarrelling; English against Irish, and negroes against both. White servants, butler, house-keeper and cook, felt their vast superiority, and not unnaturally asserted it. The negroes, though perhaps amongst the best of their class, were in comparison slow, dull, and imbued with a ridiculous sense of their superiority over "dem low whites." This feeling is

shown in a thousand ludicrous ways, only that practically they are very provoking. The negro chambermaid, who stalks along the corridors with all the stateliness of a tragedy queen, must be approached as deferentially as if you required a service from a duchess; or if not, your request will be listened to in solemn silence, and not a word of its having been understood will be vouchsafed. In fact, stolid stupidity, and tortoise-like slowness, were the characteristics of the African part of the *ménage*. On the other hand, the cooly boy was quick, willing and bright, doing as much work as all the rest put together. The Portuguese, male and female, as scullions, stable-men, &c., were ever ready and extremely obliging, so that the great value of this race, compared with the Africans, was at once apparent. Most of the Portuguese here are Protestants, converts of Dr. Kally, a Protestant clergyman at Madeira. They are a decidedly useful class to encourage as emigrants, being exceedingly industrious, and, as far as they know, most willing to do their best.

Euréekee, the cooly boy, twelve years of age, was so thoroughly satisfied as to his superiority over the Africans, that he would neither associate with the boys of that race, nor even sleep in the same room with them. Yet he was a general favourite with the household, black as well as white.

The good-nature and decision of character of the most excellent and amiable Governor, Lord Harris, was in constant requisition to keep these heterogeneous

domestics in any thing like decent order. His well-merited rebukes, however, were so imbued with the natural kindness of his character, that they always produced an impression.

Like most people of weak intellect, negroes are much given to blubbing; and no sooner do they do anything particularly indefensible, and such as no person of the commonest understanding would think of, than, on being called to account, they begin to cry. This is not the result of sensibility, but of sheer childishness. As domestics, their peculiarities of character and disposition are more apparent than in any other position, as they come more immediately under the eye. Their laziness, assumed independence, and ludicrous vanity, stand out in laughable relief. Even here, at St. Anne's, in a situation of so much higher value than they could obtain elsewhere, with liberal wages, and little to do for them, the footman, whose place it is to wait at table, will, without any sort of permission, walk off to town just before dinner is served, and some domestic whose place it is not, must be substituted to do the necessary duties. Sometimes they are so absurdly literal, as to become quite annoying. On an extremely dark night, a negro soldier was ordered to see a civilian guest home from a mess dinner; and on nearing the town, when his services were no longer required, the gentleman, wishing to stop at the house of a relative, told the man that he might return to barracks; but this the negro refused to do. "I ordered to see

you home, Sar.” “Yes, yes, my good fellow; but I wish to stop here and finish the evening.” “I no leabe you—you mos go home—dat my orders, Sar—you no obey dem, I arres’ you, Sar;” and backing this announcement with some energetic demonstrations, the unfortunate victim of military punctilio was actually compelled to go to his own house before he could get rid of his attendant.

Our *ménage* at St. Anne’s was very different from what prevailed elsewhere. Our breakfast was taken in an open pavilion, where the cool eastern breeze brushed gently past, after a fevered night in the Tropics. There were in attendance from three to five dogs, of which the principal was Ban, a somewhat savage Spanish dog, which, when he condescended to solicit attention at all, snapped his fangs in the most approved wild-boar style, showing that he was not by any means to be played with. After him came Oscar, a powerful dog, covered with scars of no remote date, as on proper occasions, he was sufficiently bellicose. Then we had a brindled, “Slut;” after which came “Beauty,” and “Watchman.” To these quadrupeds, I must add three macaws, squeaking, and trying conclusions with the rest; a hoopoi, with its plaintive and expostulatory note; a spur-wing; and the most impudent rascal of all, a black pheasant from South America, which would jump on the breakfast-table, and spring away with the contents of the first dish that took his fancy, to the imminent danger of china and finger glasses. He

invariably wound up by assailing the sideboard, and dashing at the remnants of the meal in the most unprincipled manner.

The spur-wing was a stately bird, as large as a turkey; and its hoarse, canine bark, and singularly absurd waddle, obtained for it the soubriquet of Mrs. Gamp. The attack of this burly personage on the dogs, whenever they attempted to intercept the coveted morsel thrown to her, was most ludicrous, as with expanded wings, each furnished with a powerful spur, which the bird knew well how to use, she scared them away, whilst she was herself assailed by the macaws, whose attacks upon her legs were irresistible. Altogether, it was the most diverting scene that could be conceived.

At dinner, to say nothing of huge bats that sometimes got towelled down by the napkins of the attendants, we have had a manicou or possum running round the cornice of the lofty *salle-à-manger*, and looking down on the brilliant lights and service on the table.

Spite of his lancet, the musquito is an elegant little sangrado, appropriately *costumé* in a livery of black-and-white, like that of Scaramouch. Pertinacious enough, he comes to the attack with infinite audacity, and, if uninterrupted, he dips his proboscis into your skin with a piquancy that makes you start. Nor is the cock-roach destitute of beauty, being in truth a remarkably handsome beetle, far more so than our

black-beetle. A bleeding from bats, if they can get at you, is by no means a chimerical danger. Their twittering is between the chirp of a sparrow and the squeal of a rat.

CHAPTER XIV.

WEST INDIAN DWELLINGS—CAPTURED SLAVES—WEST INDIAN SCENERY—UNPRINCIPLED LAWYERS—TROPICAL WINTER—HURRICANES—JUDGE KNOX—CURIOUS TRIAL—WEST INDIAN OFFICIALS—A NEGRO GRIEVANCE.

WEST Indian towns have nowhere any good neighbourhood; a house pertaining to an aspiring merchant, (*anglice*, shopkeeper) may be a wooden palace; but it will be surrounded by negro huts, or rather small wooden edifices, about the size of the caravans of a menagerie; many of which will be clustered together, and filled by a race with the tastes and habits of savages. Green bubbly stagnant pools invariably surround all such vicinities, and the decent order, and quiet domesticity so essential to the comfort of the respectable English, are utterly wanting. Even the aristocracy of the place, the judges, and high law officers of the Crown, are condemned to live in such dismal neighbourhoods; and the Governor himself has been kept awake half the night by the monotonous

rattle of the wearisome African drum, beating time to a negro polka.

Ice from North America is an unquestionable addition to the agreeables of tropical life ; but the beef, pork, mutton, poultry, and other viands, imported from the States, are much more equivocal delicacies. The meats which arrive in ice vessels do not exactly stink, but they are soddened, flabby, and flavourless, and certainly emit a very musty smell, which is apt to give the consumer a cholic. In fact, their decomposition has virtually begun. Vegetables, of course, are better preserved, and butter, well salted, keeps good for two or three days from the moment of the jar being opened, after which it becomes rancid, though pronounced by the Yankees to be "fus rate." In all that pertains to the table, however, Americans are much behind, their culinary tastes being, at the best, those of mere mechanics. Jonathan in the West Indies says : " Before thirty years are over, I guess, the West Indies will belong to the States."

Lodgings are scarcely to be had in Port of Spain, and can only be obtained at all in very inferior houses, mere negro nests, so that one comes constantly in contact with these sable citizens. But anything is better than a West Indian boarding house, as from the inferior rank of the generality of boarders, with habits to match, so close an intimacy as such a location compels, is anything but desirable : so at last I hired a den to myself, thus securing a great field for the study of negro life, *in situ*. And a horrible display of all that is vile it

truly is ! The recriminations and “naggings” are absolutely incessant. As soon as one row ceases, another is commenced—so excitable and irritable are these dusky demons ! Murders would be of daily occurrence, did not the fear of punishment operate as a wholesome check.

To give an idea of the heat in Trinidad, I may mention that on the 2nd December the thermometer was at one, P.M., 93° Fah., *in the shade* ; the north wind blowing at the time. Ice creams were in great request at this season.

I dined with Judge ——,* the Lucullus of Trinidad. We had, among other dainties, a roasted armadillo regularly “done brown”—and a capital dish it was. It was fully as large as a young pig, to which the meat was not dissimilar, being white, firm, tender, and delicious. The whole dinner would have done honour to Apicius.

I found even the *élite* of Trinidad society to be very provincial ; as cold, selfish, and narrow-minded as that of any cathedral town in England. They endeavour to account for their inhospitality and neglect of strangers, in a manner merely calculated to develop the low tone of their community, and naturally offensive to all respectable strangers, and to their introducers, viz., “that they are afraid of introducing strangers into their families !” “Suppose,” I inquired of one, “a gentleman came, warmly introduced to you by your

* This amiable good old man perished miserably in the ‘Amazon.’

own brother or sister, in America or England, how would you receive him?" "Why," was the response, "as I have been here so long, I would receive him after the fashion of the country—I should ask him to call in whenever he passed *my counting-room*! but should never think of introducing him at home!" Some excuse for this may probably be found in the consciousness of their own want of principle, and the general low caste of the inhabitants of these colonies. The clergy cut a very shabby figure in society, and look much as if they had been ordained by an undertaker, to be hired as mutes at a funeral. One of these ministers, a *ci-devant* custom-house officer, was so incorrigibly lazy whilst in the custom-house in Barbadoes, that they could get no work out of him.

During my stay in Trinidad, Her Majesty's steamer Growler arrived from the coast of Africa, with a cargo of one hundred and fifty men, thirty-seven women, and two hundred and fifty-four children of both sexes of recaptured negroes. These were accompanied by fourteen negro delegates to see fair-play. Forty-five negroes died on the passage. The appearance of the poor creatures was most miserable—some were mere living skeletons, others much deformed, some afflicted with incipient elephantiasis, others with huge red protuberances like raw wens. On being landed, three cart loads, chiefly of youths, were sent off to the hospital—the spectacle presented by the remainder was a wretched one. The greater part had receding foreheads and elongated craniums, and their open mouths

proclaimed the absence of all power of thought. Each was furnished with a new check shirt, and in addition kerchiefs were given to the women to tie over their heads. Many of the youngsters were tattooed by stripes on the cheek, and most had amulets very neatly sewn up in leather, suspended either round their necks or loins. They were fed on rice and plantains, and it was curious to watch them squat on their heels round a tray of rice placed on the ground, and feed themselves with their hands. Our highly civilized colonial negroes went amongst them, making their remarks to each other in nigger French, with an occasional ejaculation in English of "me Gad !"

On making his choice of these unfortunates, the planter or employer has to pay about four dollars (sixteen shillings), as an indemnity for their food during their being on land, after which payment they are indentured to him for one year. At the expiration of that period they are free; and having by that time picked up a little English or French, and a knowledge of the ways of this (to them) new world, they generally seek a new master. Still, for better or for worse, they never return to Africa; and from the moment of their landing may be considered as an integral part of the population.

Our English ideas of the West Indies, its intensely yellow skies, bright copper clouds, and purple seas, are quite a mistake. They are chosen by Stanfield for a Drury Lane diorama, because they do occasionally, though seldom, occur, yet accord with our preconceived

notions of the Tropics. The skies off the Bahamas, sunrise or sunset, are ten thousand times more delicate and exquisite in their hues. Fairly within the Antilles, we have light masses of cloud, or dark lowering clouds, as plentifully as in England, but we never have, under any circumstances, the clear, intensely blue, ætherial sky, such as is seen at Milan, Florence, Rome, or Constantinople. Egypt is glowing. There is no denying that under her sky, and no where else, are our ideas of the Torrid Zone realized. The atmosphere here is disagreeably humid, wet, warm, and yellow; whilst, in contrast, the Mediterranean is dry, warm, and clear.

The state of the civil law in Trinidad is very bad; and the lawyers generally are very unprincipled. Instead of entirely superseding the old Spanish laws, many of which were very atrocious, a few only of the more equitable English laws have been introduced without at all annulling those of Spain; so that, between Spanish and English legislation, a vast field for injustice and iniquity is opened, of which the lawyers avail themselves to the fullest extent. I think for its size and number of inhabitants, Port of Spain is the most corrupt and unprincipled place I have ever been in. The laws and other judicial acts, are so loosely worded, purposely I believe, that a clever lawyer* boasted, like O'Connell, that he could drive a coach and four through any of them; and that if the English

* Poor Scotland, who, like Judge Jefferson, perished, with his young bride, in the ill-fated 'Amazon.'

law did not answer his purpose, he could at all times fall back upon the Spanish. As a proof of this, he was to argue two cases upon one particular act: first as plaintiff, to plead its validity, and next as defendant, to deny it. It is not to the interest of the lawyers that this state of things should be amended, neither is it etiquette for a Chief Justice to revise or reform bad laws, but merely to administer them as they stand. The present Judge Knox, is a learned, wise, and, I believe, perfectly upright man, but he is the first who has been so for many years. In matters of religion, there is a good deal of hypocrisy amongst the high lawyers; and some of the most unprincipled affect great sanctity; but have, nevertheless, a very bad name. As in most places, it is the widow, the orphan, and the aged who are wronged, or those supposed to be incapable of righting themselves. The loose manner in which, till within the last ten years, things have been done in the West Indies, can hardly be conceived; marriages uncertificated, or no marriages at all, births unrecorded, and deaths unregistered, have left a very wide field for villainy and speculation, which, in such a community, has not been neglected. One coloured man having no title whatever, took possession of a large tract of crown land; sold it in portions to poor ignorant people, to the amount of three thousand dollars, and then absconded. The holders, after possessing it for several years, were compelled to come forward as "Squatters," and redeem their lots from

the crown by paying for it anew. Nearly all the mulattoes hold lands, to four-fifths of which, as illegitimate offspring, they have no sound title. The old Spanish law, which is still in force, allows a natural child one-fifth of the parental property, unless formally disinherited by the father.

There is one very disagreeable trait in the mulatto or coloured people, which is, that they are continually doing rude or ill-bred things, in their attempts to establish an equality with the white man. They will take the wall of you when they are not entitled to do so, and a group purposely obstruct you in the most inconvenient manner on the side-path, or shove up against you with the idea of "bearding the white man." Without any equivalent gain of intellect from their partly white extraction, they retain all the pride, vanity and conceit of the negroes. Amongst the very few coloured people who find their way to England, this is not observed; but in a community, their assumption is very readily noticed, and very quickly increases that feeling of dislike which the European imbibes after a very short sojourn amongst a black population, when he has the opportunity of observing all the objectionable points in prominent relief.

It is a mistake to suppose that the Arctic winter has no effect within the Torrid Zone. Certainly it does not produce cold; but December, January, and February are the three temperate months, when one may almost venture out without an umbrella to shade one's self

from the sun. The hurricane season is quite over and the rainy season terminates in December. During the hurricane season, from August to the middle of October, the shipping pay double rates of insurance. We had but one tail of a "blow," and that was in October, but it did much mischief at Tobago, where it levelled half the houses and killed nineteen people; spending itself on the Spanish island of Margareta, on the coast of South America. I was dining at St. Anne's, the residence of the Governor, where a brilliant party rendered all within the house quite heedless of the vivid lightning, rolling thunder, and deluges of rain which prevailed without. On retiring to my apartments, I was awoke at half-past one in the morning by the tremendous conflict of the elements, and the pattering of the rain *in* my room; and having got up and lit a candle, I fished my now half-soaked clothes out of the dressing-room, and was fortunate enough to throw them on to a spot that in the morning proved to be a dry one. West India ceilings are not very substantial; and His Excellency himself was obliged to turn out and rouse up the household for a regiment of pots and pans to catch the rain, which percolated through the ceiling into his quarters. Indeed, all night sleep was out of the question, and the morning brought doleful tidings of trees rooted up, bridges and roads carried away, and small craft stranded.

One morning, I looked into the Criminal Court whilst sitting, under the direction of the conscientious and erudite Chief Justice Knox. The first case was a

charge of cutting and maiming. From the fact of the country negroes being almost always armed with a cutlass, this is a very common offence. A curious fact in the present trial, was, that the "wife" of the prisoner had some time previously been the "wife" of the prosecutor; and the avowal was made by the lady herself, without the slightest sense of shame. All parties being French Negroes, an interpreter was necessary; and, from the stupidity of the prosecutor, and the *quasi femme* of the prisoner, who was a witness against him, and the blundering of the creole interpreter, the affair was the most ludicrous that can be imagined. Judge Knox, himself a creole, or white native of Trinidad, and who speaks French *comme un Français de France*, or rather like an educated French gentleman, was repeatedly obliged to interpose. However, as the culprit, after giving a sound slash with the cutlass over the temple of his antagonist, had played the good Samaritan, and bound up the wounds that he had inflicted, the capital charge fell to the ground; and he was only found guilty of a common assault.

Until within a very short space of time, the officials of the West Indies have been exceedingly corrupt, unprincipled men. A late Chief Justice, who had under his protection a mulatto woman, the mother of several of his children, never would, if he could decently avoid it, convict a negro or coloured person, no matter how evident their guilt. He was, indeed, one of the most corrupt and partial persons of whom

I have heard for many years; and in the colony bears a very indifferent character.

None of the three classes of society here, the blacks, the mulattoes, and the whites, have any confidence in the other. The negroes, whilst they hate, fear the whites; but hating equally the mulattoes, they despise and will not trust them. The mulattoes on their side, hate both parties; whilst the whites despise both the negro and the coloured tribes. I believe, however, that the negroes of Trinidad would rather labour for the white than for the mulatto, since unprincipled as are the majority of the whites in these colonies, they are not so habitually shuffling and dishonest as the mulattoes. Taken altogether, it is the worst state of society that I ever saw, except in the United States, where, however, dishonesty assumes another character, being more systematic and *en gros*.

One afternoon, about two o'clock, there was a terrible commotion amongst the negroes, and the coloured population in general: demonstrating alike their ferocity and their bad feeling towards the whites, and showing how dangerous it would be to withdraw the white troops from the West Indies. A black man of herculean proportions, a common thief, just liberated from prison, and altogether one of the vilest characters, stole a tongue from the store of the American Ice Establishment and was running off with his prize, when he was collared and thrown on the ground by Mr. W—— (one of the principals of the house), a young man of great physical strength. All this was

of course only the work of a few seconds, but it appears that the felon, in addition to his never having been quite sober for the last three months, had a diseased neck—a goitrous swelling of the glands, and in the rough process of pulling him down, in order to secure him, he was all but throttled by the rupturing of the diseased carotid artery, in which an incipient aneurism had formed. When this was discovered, the American relaxed his hold, and two doctors were instantly summoned. The man being at the moment in a state of insensibility was carried into the house, where he was copiously bled and every attention paid to him.

Two or three negroes happened to be present at his capture, and immediately a hue and cry was raised that a white man had murdered a black, causing unequalled excitement. The house was invested, and endeavours made to force the now closed doors by the infuriated mob, thirsting for the blood of the white man, and it was only from the determined conduct of the besieged Americans, assisted by the police, that a most sanguinary scene was not enacted. As usual, the women—amongst whom were the *three* wives of the felon, were the most violent, madly inciting the negroes to take vengeance. This I myself witnessed.

Meantime Mr. W—— was arrested; and in the midst of a fearful clamour, the mob assailing him with stones and glass bottles, he was conveyed to jail, though on his way, under pretence of protecting him, he was struck over the head by the *bâtons* of the negro policemen! The injured man soon recovered sufficiently

to sit up, but on an irruption of his wives to visit him, with a gang of gabbling relatives and friends, he, though unable to speak, got quite exhausted, and thirty-one hours after the theft, died! During this time, the excitement was kept up amongst the negroes by the black women, and the lives, and certainly the property of all the whites, was in imminent danger. Mr. W——, the American, knew himself to be surrounded by thieves, and acted with the promptitude such a state of affairs demanded. In Trinidad, as in Barbadoes, there is a large body of negroes of the most depraved character, ever on the *qui vive* to take advantage of any opening that will afford them a chance of plunder, and their number was augmented at this moment by a multitude of labourers out of employ—many of whom were much exasperated by the suspension of payments by the West India Bank. A cry was got up that the black man had no chance of justice against the white; and one black ruffian had the audacity to stop the carriage of the Governor, and to threaten *him* with the blacks taking the law into their own hands. Some of the women were overheard to say that “If the accident were brought in manslaughter instead of wilful murder, every black man ought to take the life of a white;” and indeed, throughout the tumult, the negro women were the instigators of all the mischief.

On the grounds above detailed, however, Mr. W—— before any judicial examination took place, was committed to jail, and on the Monday morning was brought up *handcuffed* to the police office.

The body was examined by four medical men, who reported that such was the state of the abscess, from suppuration, there being also an incipient aneurism, that the slightest violence, even a fall, would have been sufficient to accelerate death. Had there been a proper coroner in Trinidad, Mr. W—— never could, on any pretence, have been committed to prison. As it was, he was brought up on the following morning to the police office, for examination.

Many of the mulattoes were very furious, and in particular one "Fabian," who keeps an agency office.

As an effect of the maudlin, pseudo-philanthropy of Exeter Hall, the negroes had got it into their heads that the authorities were afraid to send the soldiers against them ; and unfortunately at the moment there were not any black troops in Trinidad, the 1st West India Regiment having only a few days previously left for Jamaica, whilst the 2nd West India Regiment, by whom they were to be succeeded, had not arrived. There is no doubt that the Trinidad negroes were much emboldened by this circumstance.

Strange to say, the black troops (being native Africans) have no sympathies in common with the colonial negroes. They are, on the contrary, extremely proud of wearing a red coat, and of being "Queen Victoria's soldiers," therefore they look down upon the colonial blacks ; and having no sort of delicacy of feeling or of compunction, they would as soon thrust their bayonets into a "common nigger," as look at him. In England, there is a talk of withdrawing all the

white troops from the West Indies. If this be done it will be the *coup de grâce* to these ill-used colonies. It is not in the nature of the negro to lose his brutality, and consequently his ferocity. "De niggas, Sar," said a creole lady, half French, half American to me, "de niggas is like a wild beast; when he very civil, and you tink him very tame, dat moment he bite you." And nothing can be more true than this observation of one who all her life had lived among negroes. At the present time, one word of reproof, caused by their own misconduct, renders the negroes extremely insolent. Were the troops withdrawn, in six months afterwards no white man's life would be worth an hour's purchase. Fortunately, however, the negroes are wretched cowards, and the sight of a few soldiers is sufficient to keep them in order.

When the examination of Mr. W——, before the police magistrates, took place, a detachment of sixty men, of the 19th regiment, all prepared for war à l'outrance, and under the command of Captain C——, was marched into the town, with the happiest effect on the negroes, two or three of the most insubordinate of whom were taken prisoners by the police, solely, however, in consequence of the energy of *one* of the police magistrates, Major Fagan.

The examination was a very long one, occupying two days, a host of negroes volunteering to swear to that which, at most, only two or three could possibly have witnessed, and these contradicted each other's statements in so outrageous a manner, as completely

to invalidate their own testimony. The prosecutor, a brother of the deceased, had been employed as a porter at the ice-house, and swore to having witnessed the assault, when it was proved by the next witness that he could not by any possibility have been present. This was no sooner said, than the prosecutor himself, turning round before the whole court, observed : " Yes, dat all true Misser Darceuil say," thereby admitting the utter falsehood of his own evidence. This mixture of negro cunning and simplicity, whilst it rendered nugatory the criminal charges, of course afforded the court much amusement ; but it proved that their hatred of the whites is ready to break out at any moment. The negro has not the slightest feeling of gratitude for all that has been done for him in England, though it has involved the ruin of the planters.

It was asserted that the Americans belonging to the Ice Establishment always treated the negroes very roughly ; but considering that they were surrounded by thieves, every negro employed in so large an establishment stealing something whenever he had a chance, they seemed, on the whole, to have acted with great forbearance. The death of the felon was pure accident, resulting entirely from his diseased system ; and the Americans, as the only reparation they could make, had ordered for him that negro *desideratum*, a very handsome, liberally furnished funeral. The result, however, of the first examination was, that Mr. W—— was committed to jail, to take his trial for an assault.

It was not till three months had elapsed that W——

was brought to trial, when, though only convicted of an assault, he was charged with murder—a charge which, to the great chagrin of the negroes, was utterly disproved. In any place but Trinidad, the poor man, instead of being incarcerated for three months, would not have been detained even for a single day. But in this place there is no coroner, though two officials divide the pay for the office, and no jury is ever summoned. The mockery of a coroner simply giving his opinion is sometimes enacted, though in this instance, where such an investigation was doubly desirable, neither of these paid functionaries troubled themselves in the matter: such is the horrible corruption of Trinidad. Lord Harris, the Governor, knew all this very well; but, single-handed, he could not venture to bring such a nest of unprincipled hornets upon his back.

When W—— was acquitted, the verdict was received by the whites outside with cheers; and forty Scotchmen, well armed with sticks, volunteered to escort him safely home, as all the negroes lounging about were furnished with sticks. To give some idea of the ignorance of Trinidad, the jury pronounced the prisoner to be “*guilty* of—justifiable homicide!” The trial took place in the newly-finished court-house, as splendid a specimen of architectural imbecility as can be well imagined.

CHAPTER XV.

CHRISTMAS AMONG THE NEGROES—AFRICAN CUSTOMS—MULATTOES
AND CREOLES—COLONIAL FUNCTIONARIES—THE PLANTERS—
NEGRO LADIES' BALL—SHOCK OF EARTHQUAKE.

ON Christmas Eve, it seemed as if, under the guise of religion, all Pandemonium had been let loose. At intervals during the night, bands of execrable music paraded the streets, and bad fireworks filled the atmosphere. Drunkenness bursting forth in yells, and bacchanalian orgies, was universal amongst the blacks; and fiddles, fifes, and harmonicons resounded on every side, making night hideous. Sleep was quite out of the question, in the midst of such a disgusting and fiendish saturnalia. One band, which came forth at two o'clock in the morning of Saturday, merits particular notice. It seemed to be composed of an enormous *tambour*, a thousand times louder than the drum of a *fantoccini*, and banged with maniacal violence; a fiddle or two, a triangle, and an infinity of cow-horns!

The musicians were attended by a multitude of drunken people of both sexes, the women being of the lowest class; and all dancing, screaming and clapping their hands, like so many demons. All this was the effect of the "midnight mass," ending, as all such masses do, in every species of depravity. Of course the priests encourage this, as it serves to keep up their influence over their flock.

By those who have travelled in the East, or in Egypt, an infinity of African customs can be traced in the West Indies. The drumming on the abominably monotonous tum-tum, the singing in chorus, accompanied by the simultaneous clapping of the hands, are very well for once; but, the novelty over, they become extremely disagreeable.

As a race of utterly mindless people, the negroes are fond of noise, and in a very short time, the barbarism of such sounds thoroughly overpowers all other feelings. The negroes of Trinidad are a most dishonest as well as impudent people. Of this I had ample proof in the house in which I lived. The lower parts of two houses, enclosed, as is usual here, in a large piece of ground, were filled with negro families, a regular colony of blacks, scarcely one of which would pay any rent to the poor but respectable white widow who owns the place. They by turns bullied, laughed at, and defied the poor old creature (who has no money to go to law, and the lawyers in Trinidad are regular harpies); and when warned to quit, they refused to go; and so vin-

dictive were they, that the poor woman was actually afraid to turn them out.

I never saw in the West Indies any approximation in countenance to a Yarico ; nothing soft, gentle, or loveable in the face of any coloured woman ; but, on the contrary, either a fierce or a very disagreeable expression. Black eyes, of course they all have, but it is not a feminine black ; and their black hair is of a horse-hair quality, very coarse. The dumpy nose, with expanded nostrils, and broad flat lips, upon a projecting under face, unpleasantly approximate to the negro, and is generally borne out by the moral qualities, all being very bad tempers, and having an enormous preponderance of pride and vanity. Such are the higher class of mulattoes. To men of little observation, the dawdling habits, and drawling tone of voice of these people, do duty for a mildness of character which is very far from existing should they happen to be at all excited. To pass over the mendacity of even the creoles, the coloured tribes have no regard whatever for truth — as little, indeed, as the American “ladies.” Indeed, throughout the West Indies, the population is leavened with the Yankee character and feeling.

I heard from an old creole inhabitant of St. Barts, a curious observation, well worth the notice of philosophers, namely : that mulattoes of the same class (*i. e.*, exactly the same degree of colour) rarely or ever have children.

During my stay in Trinidad all was gloom and depression. The British West India islands are virtually bankrupt; whilst the islands of every other nation are as flourishing as the cedars of Lebanon. There must be something radically wrong in this! False principles and policies are at work as if the Evil One had assumed the garb of a saint, and made Exeter Hall his head-quarters. Yet what would England be without her colonies? about as formidable as Switzerland! Foreigners praise her liberality, because they gain by it, and laugh at her in their sleeves.

There is one peculiarity in the negro character which I must not omit to notice. In common with the dog, the parrot, and many other of the inferior animals, the negro has a powerful memory. He never forgets the white man whom he has once seen; and occasionally this faculty assists him to acquire a limited knowledge of things; but the inferiority of his intellect is shown in his incapacity to reflect, or to apply to any practical purpose the little learning he acquires. This is in the race, and is an evil which no education can correct.

In consequence of the checks given by the home government, the measures of the Local governments of the British West India islands are extremely timid. They scarcely dare, indeed, to act at all, however pressing the emergency, lest they should be called over the coals at home. In January, 1848, two of the most

atrocious murderers I ever heard of were in the Port of Spain jail, and one of them concocted a plan to murder the jailor and other officers of the prison, and then liberate the other prisoners ; but the authorities, from a fear that they would be censured at home, reprieved them both. The mail, however, contrary to expectation, brought out a censure for not allowing the law to take its course, with a suggestion not to trouble Her Majesty's Government again in such cases. This seems like the dawn of a better state of things for the colonies, though a functionary of equivocal character is again let loose on Trinidad.

Notwithstanding the political blunders perpetrated by the Home government, in giving way to the senseless outcry of a set of miserable fanatics of very doubtful sincerity, and thus depriving these colonies of their labourers, the complaints made by the planters of Trinidad are not all well founded ; as very few of them indeed had any capital to begin upon. In four cases out of five the mode of turning planter has been this : an estate is put up for sale, and a man, often an overseer, in position a very inferior person, or at best a manager, without a farthing of capital, will take it, getting a couple of friends to stand as guarantees for the payment of the purchase money. Upon this, he raises money in England at a ruinous rate altogether, seldom less than fifteen per cent., and often much more, with the proviso of consigning all the sugar that he may make to the par-

ticular house which favours him with the loan. The result of such a system is usually this: if, under the present colonial laws, some very unlooked-for circumstance should for a season raise the price of sugar above the usual standard, in England, he may probably be enabled to pay the interest of the money, and in addition may possibly make enough to pay his personal expenses for the current year; but the chances are, that the second year he will be unable to do this; the fact being, that he is paying as interest the money that otherwise would support him. In such a state of affairs, anything like a monetary crisis ruins him at once, as he has not a *sou* to fall back upon. Add to this, the contingencies of bad crops, bad servants, and extortion in every shape, the average years will be against him. The merchant at home, in addition to the enormous interest he exacts, has monopolized all his sugar, giving him in return whatever price his conscience permits; and every year the planter becomes more and more involved, and at length is compelled to give up the estate altogether. In this way, the nominal owner is virtually only the slave of the merchant at home; but as he began without capital, and in consequence is compelled to sell the estate (scarcely *his*), he is no worse off at the end than the beginning, and has in the interim gained his livelihood for ten, twelve, or as many more years as he has managed to hold the estate. These are the men who are making the greatest outcry in the colonies; but as they were never slave-owners themselves, they have not lost any-

thing by the Emancipation Act. Such are four-fifths of the planters of Trinidad. At present "planter" means merely a sugar farmer—a person of the class and habits of a common farmer at home. Ask an overseer, ranking with a ploughman in England, what he is, and he will tell you "a planter." Throughout these colonies, not one word that we read in the "Cruise of the Midge," or Basil Hall's "Fragments," and works of a similar nature, of their social condition, will give any idea of what now exists.

One night, hearing a horrible drumming on the tum-tums, I followed the sounds, and in the suburbs of the town came to a very characteristic scene—a negro *ladies'* ball. A narrow entry led to a spacious shed, rudely thatched with palm branches; from the joists of which hung a clumsy wooden chandelier, and at intervals, stuck upon high poles, serving as candelabras, were large tallow candles, casting a fitful glare over the place. At the head of this dingy *salon de danse* were five huge negroes, thumping might and main on casks, the tops of which were covered with parchment. Ranged on one side were twenty negresses roaring a chorus, each being in motion, turning half round alternately without moving from the spot. These dingy damsels, of whose features nothing but their rolling eye-balls and brilliant teeth were visible, raised their voices to a pitch that would have satisfied the King of Ashantee. In front of the choristers were about a dozen other ladies, having their woolly hair inclosed by a Madras handkerchief, an Indian imitation of a Scotch

tartan, green and red, with white checks, which was preposterously elongated over the back of the head, and stuck over with gold shirt pins, and a profusion of showy Martinique gold ornaments of the flimsiest texture. Enormous bunches of ear-rings hung from their ears, and their necks were adorned with a perfect gorget of gold chains and beads, as large as gooseberries, of the same material. These reposed on a large handkerchief, as stiff as buckram, worn ruff fashion, and projecting very far behind. The waists of the Trinidad negresses are absurdly short, so that a skirt, or *jupe*, always of a different colour, bags out, when the wearer is at rest, in one unbroken line, from nearly under the arms quite to the feet, or rather as a train. Nothing can be more grotesque than the whole costume.


Each of the ladies was performing a set of ludicrous evolutions, turning quite independently of her neighbour; and such jerkings, and courtesies, such genuflections and whirls as I beheld, baffle description! All danced with bare feet, for the dancing sake, as men rarely join the festive throng, and each performer had to pay a small sum for the pleasure. The place was surrounded by a crowd of dark men and women, quietly looking on, and smoking. The Terpsichoreans were chiefly servants and laundresses, who, for such displays, make use of their customers' cambric handkerchiefs. Many ladies, indeed, lend their ornaments to favourite servants for these occasions, but no negress would wear anything but gold. The presence of a white person at

these balls, though on the whole considered complimentary, is only half relished, as negroes have a great dread of being quizzed. The whole scene was truly African, and showed how little the negroes are advanced in civilization. If left to themselves, they would in fifty years relapse into their pristine barbarism.

I afterwards attended several of these balls, some of which were held in *demi toilette*, each of the characters holding in her hand a "shock-shock," a little calibash, filled with peas, by shaking which a rattling is produced in cadence with the *tambours*, which keep admirable time. So fond of dancing are negroes, of all ages, that I traced two tum-tums to a private yard, where the chorus was composed of young negro females, and the dancers of old women, while the ball was lighted by two tallow candles, held by boys.

The rainy season terminated at the beginning of February, and was followed by fine dry weather, accompanied, however, by cold northerly winds, which gave every one the rheumatism. Nor was this the worst, for the sun acting on the still humid ground, generated a miasma, producing fever in the country places. Even in Port of Spain no one was quite well, but nothing serious occurred, though Barbadoes was visited with yellow fever. Occasionally the trade-winds blew very hard.

One night, my parrot (which slept in my room) came down with a flap on the floor, and ran pattering about in an unaccountable manner. I got a



light and replaced the bird, whose wings were expanded, on his high roost near the ceiling. I saw by my watch that it was within a few minutes of four A. M. ; and next day everybody was talking of the earthquake, which had happened just at that time. Thus the mystery of the parrot was explained. I, though awake, had not felt the shock ; but birds are extremely susceptible on such occasions. Many of the timid creoles had rushed into the streets.

Coushcoush, a small species of yam, very white inside, with a tinge of purple externally, is by far the best vegetable, peculiar to the Tropics, that I have seen, and better, I think, than any potato. I mention these things particularly, because in England there is so much exaggeration about tropical fruits and vegetables. Coushcoush is known here by the very droll negro name of yam-seeds. There is also a variety of a dark purple throughout, but not so good.

I attempted to get acquainted with a coloured family of the highest respectability, but found it impossible to continue the intimacy. The family consisted of three young ladies, *almost* white, and two brothers, one of whom was qualifying for the Church. All were very kind, and the female part sufficiently intelligent, so that as far as they themselves went, they were perfectly unexceptionable. But coloured families like these labour under great disadvantages, as they are generally so glad to get white people of any rank to visit them, that one is apt to meet very inferior whites in such houses, and some by no means reputable.

We were consequently formally introduced to shopmen of the town, and people whose acquaintance we would, from their indifferent characters, willingly have avoided. So after some ineffectual remonstrances against the practice of introductions in so heterogeneous a set, we were fairly compelled to give up the acquaintance, and leave them to their connections previously formed. The objection there must ever be to meet the class of whites who visit coloured people, will effectually prevent these aspirants from rising in the scale of society. In this case, the female part were more intelligent and refined than the men; but all seemed to retain the laughing propensities of their negro progenitors. Philosophically considered, it is astonishing to notice in the *quasi* whites how long this levity, and incapacity to reflect deeply are preserved; and, in my opinion, it marks most clearly the natural intellectual inferiority of the African races.

CHAPTER XVI.

CHACHACARE — MADEMOISELLE EMILIE — CHICA-CHICA — NEGRO
COOKERY — THE MANCHINEEL — LOST IN THE BUSH — WHALE
FISHERY — GASPARI — FLETCHING THE WHALE — THE SHARK —
CHICA-CHICA RELIGION.

I LEFT Port of Spain on the 11th of February, 1848, in company with Mr. W——, in a whale-boat, for Chachacare, one of the islands of the Boccas del Drago. We set out at two o'clock, and arrived at the Boccas by nine o'clock at night. In passing these justly-dreaded mouths, through which the whole current of the Oronoco sweeps its way with impetuous rush, we had a taste of the danger, as in shaving Point Giraud, we were impelled with all but resistless force upon its rocky beach. We felt the reflux of the waves, and our four men were obliged to "give way" for their lives. In a few minutes we shot into smooth water, when one of our men cried out : "De danger past now, Sar ; but plenty people bin drowned dere, cause dem not know how to 'teer." This was intended as a sly compliment to me, as I had the helm.

A bright moonlight brought us to the house of Mademoiselle Emilie, an ancient negro lady of eighty-five years, with wool as white as the driven fleece, who received us with great civility. It must be remembered that, in such out-of-the-way places as these islands, there are no villages, and but few visitors, consequently there are no taverns; some isolated houses are scattered about, three of which accommodate strangers, but the rest are mere negro huts; so that visitors are thrown entirely upon the courtesy of the inhabitants, which, children included, may number sixty. Mademoiselle Emilie was the owner of thirty-six quarries of land (one hundred acres), but it produced no revenue.

Chachacare is eighteen miles from Port of Spain. It forms one side of the Bocca Grande, which has the Spanish Main on the other.

We brought the greater part of our provisions with us, such as wine, brandy, bread, cheese, candles, lard, &c.; but we obtained here, fowls, fish, eggs and cassava bread. Each of us was allotted a bed-room, with the run of the house; and we hired two servants, and made ourselves as snug as we could. My chamber was a cock-loft, open, if not to "*all* the winds of heaven," at least to a great many of them, and no exception was taken to rain.

Chica-chicá, as it is familiarly called, is in form like the open legs of a pair of compasses, between which there runs up a bay about two miles deep. At the head of this bay stood our house. Around were green hills of


from five to eight hundred feet in height, along the ridges of which were foot-paths leading to the various negro provision-grounds, very steep and fatiguing to climb. Viewed from below, the scene was that of a Highland Loch; but when contemplated from the heights, was only very so-so. In a day or two, therefore, our situation became intolerably stupid. The walks were very limited, and there was nothing to interest us, so that we were undergoing a voluntary imprisonment, by no means of an agreeable character.

Here we were confined to the range of negro cookery, which to Englishmen is intolerable; as from their childhood, negroes are accustomed to consider putrid salt fish, dressed with rancid oil, or worse butter, the acme of luxury; and their tastes become so intensely saline, that every dish, however fresh in itself, is brought up to their standard of saltiness. The term "corned" is in great use throughout the West Indies; and if you are not very careful to superintend purchases yourself, you are likely, instead of the dish of fresh fish that you anticipated, to get some that has been caught over-night and corned, the explanation being: "Me carn um to make um keep." Fowls, rarely good in the West Indies, are cut into small pieces, put into an earthen cooking-pot, with a little water and a good deal of salt butter, and thus stewed for several hours. Meat is fried in bad lard. It will, therefore, be readily imagined, that, taken altogether, our *cuisine* was a very unsatisfactory one. We had, however, excellent eggs, plenty of goat's milk, and

good cassava bread: flour being too dear for these people to purchase.


I walked round the beach to the house of Mr. Llianos, a government schoolmaster, and the deputy-registrar. I was armed with a cutlass, which did good service in cutting away the branches that encroached on the narrow foot-path, the only road. Negroes are so lazy, that if a shrub spring up right in the path, rather than take a moment's trouble to cut it down, they will pass round on either side, and put aside boughs with their paws, rather than chop them off.

We got down to the beach, and lost our way, so mystifying is the bush! Coming to some manchineel trees on the beach, I cut down their branches, and incautiously putting aside some twigs, my cutlass snapped short off, and put an end to that useful occupation. I then scrambled partly up the hill to take our bearings, and in returning met two children, who put us on the right track. We had to return some distance, the path mounting high above the beach, and we scrambled along to a negro hut, buried in a grove of cocoa-nut and manchineel trees. Hence we got up the hill to Mr. Llianos, when my friend Mr. W——, an old gentleman of seventy-one, suddenly began to roar in great pain. We were, of course, all astonishment, wondering what it could be. Was it rheumatism? Cramp? Cholic? No; he had simply wiped his face with his handkerchief, and had got the acrid manchineel milk into his eyes. Remedies of various sorts were tried; sweet-oil, sea-water, &c., but



nothing gave him relief, and for many hours he suffered the most excruciating agony. After two hours a pirogue was procured, and now quite blind he was led down the precipitous path to the beach, and with great difficulty embarked. We got back to Mademoiselle Emilie's, where new remedies were again tried. The leaves of the sour-sop were boiled, and mixed plentifully with sweet-oil, and with this mixture his face was lubricated; but it was not until the next morning that he felt at all relieved, the inflammation remaining all this day. So much for trifling with manchineel trees.

Though extremely civil, the negroes of Chica-chicá are a set of thorough thieves. The poor old creature, Mademoiselle Emilie, had on the emancipation taking place, let to her negroes pieces of land at a very low rent, which afterwards they refused to pay for, saying, that "God gave the earth to all!" "So," said the old lady, "I own all this land, and often have not half a bit (twopence halfpenny) to buy salt fish. They plunder my provision-grounds, steal my fowls, and laugh me to scorn. What can an old woman like myself do? I am tired of life and wish to die—I wish to live no longer! Seven thousand dollars (fifteen hundred pounds) were awarded me as compensation money on the abolition of slavery, not one dollar of which have I received, having been swindled out of all by a lawyer of Port of Spain. I nebber get one 'tampee (stampee)." Such was the real truth. The West Indies are a terrible place for helpless old people,



so heartless are the villainies perpetrated by black, brown, and white.

Mademoiselle Emilie sells land at sixteen dollars (three pounds seven shillings) the quarree. The worst of Chica-chicá is, that there are no rivers or springs in this island, only rain-water conserved in tanks, which are extremely expensive to make. There is a whaling establishment on the opposite side of the bay, the whale-boats of which have to fetch their water from Chaguramus Bay, a distance of about eight miles.

One night here we had heavy rain-squalls; and as the roof of my dormitory was only shingled, the wet came pouring in. I got a light, and jumped out of bed in order to fish up my clothes and put them under the bed, in which operation I was materially assisted by an umbrella. Happening to cast a glance towards the bed, I was horrified to see a large black reptile wriggle out from behind my pillow. It seemed too short for a snake; and on a more careful reconnoissance, I found it was an enormous black centipede. I gave battle with my *parapluie*, and whacking away, I finally severed his head from his body. This intrusive bed-fellow measured eight inches in length, and was exceedingly broad. Although its bite is not fatal to people of ordinary purity of blood, this black centipede is of the worst sort, and will inflict a grievous wound with its powerful crab-like nippers, producing fever and perhaps a fortnight's illness. On my return to town, I got the body embalmed as a relique of the Torrid Zone. Ordinarily, these reptiles feed on cock-roaches and the

huge tropical spiders, the legs of which are continually dropping on the ground, minus the bodies. It appears that the white hassock is the nidus of the young, who literally feed upon the mother, eating right through her, when of course her useless legs drop upon the ground. The same is done by the young of the scorpion, who in like manner destroy their parent. The white hassock is opened by the negroes and applied to chapped lips, or as a styptic for cuts. The negroes have a great number of herbs and other excellent remedies for various ills. Four leaves of the sour-sop boiled, and drank as tea, is an infallible recipe to cure the effects of drunkenness.

Hearing that a whale had been caught by the boats of Messrs. Tardieu, we went over to the Island of Gasparie, seven miles distant, to see the process of fletching, and if possible, to get a shark, in order to make an accurate drawing of one.

To show the deterioration of West India property, I may mention that we passed *en route* the whaling establishment of Monsieur Joel, which consisted of three houses (two of them large dwelling-houses) and a large isolated brick-built boiling-house, with five quarries (sixteen acres) of good land, partly in cultivation. "I offered to buy that," said Monsieur C—— our Captain, also a whaler, "I offered him two hundred dollars for it (forty-two pounds) but he refused my offer." "What!" said I, "two hundred dollars for the whole?" "Why, yes, and quite enough!" Monsieur Joel, indeed, was unconscionable enough to

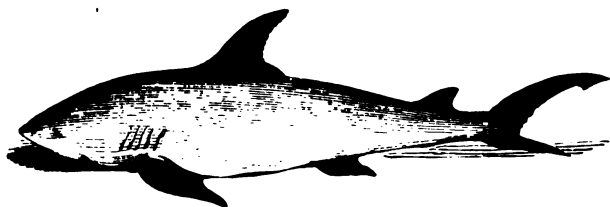
demand two thousand dollars, or four hundred pounds sterling for the estate. The place was at this time abandoned, as were most of even the smaller houses and lands along the Bay of Chica-chicá, from the difficulty of getting labour.

The islands of the Boccas embrace some lovely scenery, combining romantic precipices and luxuriant woods. They are surrounded by currents which are so sluice-like, that boats would be continually liable to be carried out to sea or lost. Huevos, or Egg Island, derives its name from having been the great deposit of turtles' eggs in the time of the Spaniards. Monos, or Ape Isle, a large inhabited territory, is named from the circumstance of its first inhabitants on its eastern side having heard the chattering of the monkeys in Scotland Bay, on the main land of Trinidad. There are some lovely spots on Monos. Land there is worth thirty dollars a quarree.

We arrived at Gasparie at nine o'clock A.M., and landed at Monsieur Tardieu's amidst a brigade of whale-boats, busily employed in fletching the whale. The black leviathan lay in tolerably deep water alongside a low wharf; and each enormous piece as it was fletched off was lifted up by a pair of shears. The first thing that I noticed was, that instead of the skin of the whale being a smooth surface, it was ribbed in ridges of about six inches broad, very black and shiny and marbled with white; the inside or blubber being snow-white, and when stripped, showing beneath the "beef"—more delicate-looking than our land

beef. What with the whale, and what with the negroes, the stench was so sickening, that several times I was nearly overcome. There was, at first, nothing else to see but a dead shark; but as pieces of offal were detached from the body of the whale, a fierce battle of sharks ensued under the water, the fins and tails of the combatants being seen as they "lashed with idle rage" the disturbed sea. Sometimes a huge shark would leap quite out of the water like a salmon or a porpoise. There was generally a negro up to his middle in the bowels of the whale, assisting to sever the masses of blubber; and now and then a hungry shark would make a grab at some morsel close to the man, when he would give it a blow over the nose with the fletching knife, much as one would thump an over-greedy dog. Habit renders these people callous. Upwards of fifty sharks had been lanced that morning, but plenty were still left. Sharks will eat a quarter of a whale in one night, and therefore it is of course an object with the whalers to strip the body of the leviathan as quickly as possible. The sea was red with blood, and the crews of the surrounding-boats were patiently waiting their lumps of whale beef to cook for their dinner. All this, though curious enough to a novice, was, after the first glance, revolting. Everybody seemed to be running about with knives in their hands or carrying away beef to be cooked; and the smell was so disagreeable, that I could not muster up resolution enough to taste the marine viand.

I gave a dollar to a negro to fish me up a huge shark, seven feet long, of which I made an accurate drawing—not a pleasant task in such a tainted atmo-



sphere. The shark had to be hoisted out of the sea by the tackle and fall. He was not quite dead when I began, but did not long survive.

The whale was about thirty feet in length, and would yield from fifteen to twenty-three barrels of oil. It was worth about two hundred pounds. A good Greenland whale of an average size is worth a thousand pounds.

I heard a droll story, namely, that whales whilst feeding at the bottom of the sea "sing beautifully." "Often," said the narrator, "have I on a calm still night, whilst on the watch in a boat, heard them whilst feeding, sing below me, by which sounds I detected their 'whereabouts,' and could always tell where they would ascend to respire, by their short asthmatic breathings like that of a man out of breath;" and here he imitated the sounds, which proved to be octaves. The puffings were like those of a steam-locomotive on

its first coming into play. This reminded me of the legendary songs of the mermaids.

Gasparie is an island a mile and a half long by a quarter of a mile broad. It is uninhabited, except in the whaling season; the land, which is private property, is worth thirty dollars a quarree. It has not, however, any water. There are two curious stalactical caves in the island; but the tide was too high to admit of our seeing beyond the mouth of them.

Going home we saw a shark leap right out of the water, high in the air. I thought it would have been rather embarrassing had he alighted in our boat.

In so out-of-the-way a place as Chica-chicá, with a community of sixty people, it might fairly be expected that there would be very little riot. This, however, is far from being the case; for negroes, though they will never pay a debt until the money is extorted from them, and are bewailing their wretched condition, spend most of their nights, and of course gains, in the wildest revelry, dancing and drinking, not to say debauchery. The whole of Saturday night, from dusk until after daybreak on Sunday, were we kept awake by the monstrous thumpings of the tum-tums, assisted by the usual screaming chorus of all the women of the place; and during our stay, scarcely a night passed without our being disturbed by these most disagreeable orgies. Ill or well, wake what hour of the night we might, we were sure to hear the tum-tums at work in some direction or other.

Negroes scarcely know what quiet means; they have no mind, no reflection, beyond the low cunning which prompts them to thief or swindle.

There is a Roman Catholic church at Chica-chicá, to which pious Mademoiselle Emilie has given four quarrees of land (about ten acres), but a priest scarcely ever visits the island.

CHAPTER XVII.

RETURN TO TRINIDAD—THE CARNIVAL—JOURNEY TO ORAPOUCHE
—THE HIGH WOODS—SIPARIA—THE ABBE K—.—PRIMITIVE
POPULATION—ADVENTURE IN THE WOODS—THE LAGOON—
INSOLENT LABOURERS—THE MOSQUITO WORM—PROSPECT
ESTATE.

WE left Chica-chicá in a pirogue, and returned to town. We had found the air at Chica-chicá cooler than at Port of Spain ; and though we had had a good deal of rain, were altogether much benefitted by the change. The sea-bathing was excellent, and quite safe from sharks, or sea-eggs ; yet immersion had caused a disagreeable eruption of the skin—a sort of prickly heat, closely approximating to erysipelas. I experienced the same sort of feeling on bathing in the United States.

No one can visit Trinidad, and omit to notice the Bois Immortelle, which is the characteristic of the island ; and is a tall portly tree, which would, instead of leaves, seem to a casual observer, to bear flowers of a brilliant orange. A closer inspection reveals, on

the lower branches, a few scattered green leaves, absolutely absorbed in one gay scarlet, of the noble top. The general hue of nature here is green, more or less bright, interspersed by patches of the yellowest red, which contrast oddly enough. To a stranger, nothing is more interesting than the *rus in urbe* look of most West Indian towns; in the very centre of the city, cocoa-nut trees, cabbage-palms, the cylindrical cactus, and the broad-leaved plantain, wave their picturesque branches in dark relief against the fervent sunset.

The coolie woman, with her bangles, her fantastic drapery, and her naked child on her hip, accompanied by her husband in a ridiculously incongruous costume, half Scotch, half Hindoo, wends her way to her home, in some dry ditch; and negroes loiter lazily to their huts. Often have I sauntered at dusk through the deserted streets of the suburbs of Port of Spain, when the only token of their having been inhabited at all was the bad effluvia of those who so recently passed along them; this revolting odour is a great drawback to the romance of the Tropics. Many falsehoods have been written on this subject by the anti-slavery party; but it is a fact, that in all hot countries, the coloured races smell most offensively.

Once for all, I disclaim any party. I am neither an emancipationist, nor an upholder of slavery. I have no interest in the matter either way; but, from observation, I feel assured that for negroes a *restricted* freedom is necessary, for they have not the judgment to conduct themselves properly, as white freemen would do;

nor are they, in consequence, entitled to the same privileges.

Amongst the peculiarities of Trinidad, are the Mandingo priests, or African negro Mohammedans. These fellows walk about the town in large-sleeved white surplices, made very nearly like ours, broad-brimmed straw hats, bare legs, and coolie sandals. They have very intelligent, though roguish physiognomies, and are, indeed, said to be great rascals. The lower class Mandingo priests usually wear the common robe of light blue.

Trinidad is a famous place for consumptive people : if the disease be incipient they get well in a few months ; if advanced, all the distressing symptoms quickly disappear. Of this, three well-marked instances have come under my personal notice, and I have heard of several others. Many, whose lives would not, from phthisis, be worth six months purchase in Great Britain, live here with impunity.

The climate of Madeira, although unquestionably ameliorative, is only the half-way house to a radical cure.

I was residing in Trinidad during the Carnival, which commenced on Sunday, the 7th of March, at midnight. I had seen the Carnival at Florence, at Syra in Greece, and in Rome ; and was now about to witness a negro masquerade, which, from its squalid splendour, was not unamusing, cheapness being the grand requisite. The maskers parade the streets in gangs of from ten to twenty, occasionally joining forces

in procession. The primitives were negroes, as nearly naked as might be, bedaubed with a black varnish. One of this gang had a long chain and padlock attached to his leg, which chain the others pulled. What this typified, I was unable to learn ; but, as the chained one was occasionally thrown down on the ground, and treated with a mock bastinadoing it probably represented slavery. Each mask was armed with a good stout quarter-staff, so that they could overcome one-half more police than themselves, should occasion present itself. Parties of negro ladies danced through the streets, each *clique* distinguished by boddices of the same colour. Every negro, male and female, wore a white flesh-coloured mask, their woolly hair carefully concealed by handkerchiefs ; this, contrasted with the black bosom and arms, was droll in the extreme. Those ladies who aimed at the superior civilization of shoes and stockings, invariably clothed their pedal extremities in pink silk stockings and blue, white, or yellow kid shoes, sandled up their sturdy legs. For the men, the predominating character was Pulinchinello ; every second negro, at least, aiming at playing the continental Jack-pudding. Pirates too were very common, dressed in Guernsey frocks, full scarlet trowsers, and red woollen cap, with wooden pistols for arms. From the utter want of spirit, and sneaking deportment of these bold corsairs, I presumed them to have come from the Pacific. Turks also there were, and one Highlander, a most ludicrous caricature of the Gael, being arrayed in a scarlet coat, huge grenadier cap, a kilt of light

blue chintz, striped with white, a most indescribable philibeg, black legs of course, and white socks bound with dirty pink ribbon. There were also two grand processions, having triumphal "wans," one of which was to commemorate the recent marriage of a high law-officer; the other, judging from the royal arms in front (worth a guinea of anybody's money, if only for the painting—the lion looking like a recently drowned puppy), and a canopy of red glazed calico, trimmed with silver tinsel, shading a royal pair, who, in conscious majesty, sat within, represented the Sovereign pair of England. This brilliant *cortège* was marshalled forward by a huge negro, in a celestial dress, made after the conventional fashion of the angel Gabriel; and who stalked along, spear in hand, as if intent on doing dire deeds. The best embodiments were the Indians of South America, daubed with red ochre; personified by the Spanish peons from the Main, themselves half Indian, as testified by their exquisitely small feet and hands. Many of these had real Indian quivers and bows, as well as baskets; and, doubtless, were very fair representatives of the characters they assumed. In this costume children, looked very pretty. One personation of Death, having what was understood to be a skeleton painted on a coal-black shape, stalked about with part of a horse's vertebra attached to him, and a horse's thigh bone in his hand; but his most telling movements only elicited shouts of laughter. I noticed that whenever a *black* mask appeared, it was sure to be a *white* man. Little girls dressed *à la jupe*, in the

trai creole negro costume, looked very interesting. All parties with the assistance of bands of execrable music, made a tremendous uproar; and most of us were glad when the priestly saturnalia was over.

I went down to the Jack-Spaniards, at Orapouche, to join Mr. Devenish, in a surveying expedition to the Mission of Siparia, a lonely place in the high woods, of the beauties of which report spoke highly. At dinner I got stung in the face by a small species of Jack-Spaniard, that flew against the huge glass shade of the candle, and vented his disappointment on me. For a few minutes the pain was agonizing, but a little sweet-oil soon assuaged it.

We set off the next day in grand *tenue*: Mr. Devenish, and Don Jose, a Spanish assistant and guide, on horseback, and I mounted on a mule, while a negro came on behind, with a basket of provisions, carried on his head.

We soon got into the high woods — a repetition of those of La Brea. The distance from Orapouche to Siparia is ten miles, and there is scarcely a yard of level ground throughout the whole journey, being either a scramble up hill, or something very like a slide down. The hollows between make a superabundance of tenacious mud, and were by far the most disagreeable part of the route, as the animals naturally seek the hardest ground, close to the trees, or far worse, their stumps, by which one's knees suffer severely. In truth, the journey would have been far easier performed on foot. Deep, solemn woods, sacred to solitude, and magnificent

gloom, are very fine terms, but thorns and insects make the reality far from pleasant.

At length we came to the Rio Negro, now about four yards wide and three feet deep, but in the rainy season a roaring furious river, of formidable depth and dimensions. The water was of the darkest brown—whence its name. We passed three or four streams, smaller, but much worse, because on either side was a yard or two of deep mud. Into one of these I was nearly thrown, through the pranks of a thoughtless Spanish boy who had joined our train. In difficult places mules should never be urged on; all that the rider has to do is to hold the reins, and let the prudent animal choose his own time and place. Whilst my mule was carefully selecting his road, the boy gave him a lash, when up went his heels, and I nearly went over his head into the mud and water. The mule chose to leap over the next Rio—a feat I was by no means prepared for. Some streams had bridges of either a log of wood, or three or four bamboos. Here we generally dismounted, and led the animals across. No sounds broke these solitudes but the *campanero* ringing his silver axe, and our own voices.

The ascents and descents, which were so extremely steep, soon became very tiresome; and I was glad enough to emerge into the open air. We came to a clearing and a cottage or two, though only to re-enter the woods, but at last we reached traces of man's residence and industry—plantains, manioc, Indian corn and canes, and amidst all rose Siparia! The settlement disap-

pointed me, and I mentally exclaimed, "Can *this* be Siparia?" I could not appreciate or see its beauty.

About five-and-twenty huts, built of roseau, wattled with the incombustible timmeet, and then plastered with yellow mud—this was Siparia. After a glance round, we went to the house of the great man of the place, Signor Basilis Tabaris, a very civil old negro.

The inhabitants are a mixture of Spanish peons, Arawac Indians, and French negroes; but the Indian blood, which predominates, is apparent enough in the long eyes, sleek hair, and yellow skin, with a character of face far superior to that of the negro, being full of intelligence; having, however, a great leaven of slyness. Spanish is generally spoken, and only a few understand negro French. To us, all were extremely civil, in hope of getting good bargains in their land, as no survey having yet been made of these crown-lands, they are all squatters, of which I shall say more anon.

We made the tour of the mission. The inhabitants are Roman Catholics, and the Abbé K——, of Orapouche, occasionally officiates, in an extremely rustic church. The Virgin had on a straw hat, and a silk gown with gigôt sleeves! The mansions of Siparia were primitive enough—a chair or table was seldom found, but sometimes a short settle, such as a hedge ale-house at home could produce. Generally, however, even this was wanting, and one or other of the inmates was swinging in a hammock, the only bed in this part of the world. Not unfrequently they were suffering from *calentura*, or fever and ague. One fine lad

was writhing with pleurisy, but could get no help, as doctors never find their way to these regions. Ladders of bamboo, a few cages of the same material, Indian baskets, and a set of calabashes, usually comprised the whole of the domestic chattels. Food, however, was in abundance, and in one house we saw five quanks, or wild hogs, *buccanneéd*, i.e. salted and smoked; a tátoo, or armadillo; and a lap: exquisite viands all, and I think superior to any meat that we have in England. With these, plantains, yams, and cassava bread, to say nothing of ramiers, and other birds, all the substantial part of living was provided. In another house we found a family of hunters. This place was merely a spacious shed, undivided into apartments, only wattled in one corner, where the hammocks were slung, in one of which a woman was lazily swinging. Several naked children were playing about, and half a dozen tired dogs dozed on the floor—with one eye open, however; whilst in a rude cage a live wild hog was confined, and was grunting and gnashing his teeth. For this, which, if dead, two dollars would be taken, no less than five dollars or a guinea was demanded. So much for primitive simplicity! Altogether, I have rarely seen a more barbarous scene than there met my eye—one that could not be exceeded in rudeness in the South Sea islands.

I went to see a pure Arawac Indian woman. She exhibited all the Carib characteristics: high cheek-bones, obliquely set, Indian eyes, long hair, and parchement colour. She spoke Spanish well, and was one of

the most decent persons in the whole place. I saw none of the apathy so often mentioned. I afterwards visited a man, who asserted himself to be one hundred and six years of age. He could see and hear perfectly well, and seemed as likely as not to live twenty years longer. On leaving his hut, I was rather startled in this secluded spot, shut out from the world, to hear a lad whistle the "Cellarius Polka!"

I entered a neat Spanish mud casa, where two men were busily employed rolling cigars, the quality of which is by smokers considered very good. Between the two they can make nine hundred a day. The celerity with which each cigar was fashioned was something quite astonishing. I then called on —, the Registrar. This was the school; and we found the schoolmaster, a coloured man, who spoke English very well. He complained dreadfully of the place, and said that "the people were very bad; and that he could get scarcely anything to eat, as they refused to sell him anything."

We got back to Signor Tabaris in time for dinner, and had some smoked lap, the first time that I was so fortunate as to taste this rare dainty, which is so good, that in a place where cash is comparatively of little value, people will rarely sell it, but eat it themselves—and they are very right. Only fancy pork without fat—exquisite, without being greasy. But fresh, unsmoked lap, must be the *vrai* ambrosia. With this, a dozen fresh eggs, as an omelette, and a bottle or two of ale, we managed to rough it pretty well.

At dinner we heard why the schoolmaster could get but little to eat, and that with difficulty. He was unpopular ; for though he scarcely knew how to read and write, and had a mind *utterly* uninformed by reading or society, he was the most pompous, assuming dog imaginable. Even shrewd, illiterate people do not like this, and the *dominie* suffered in consequence.

Siparia must be the most wretchedly stupid place to remain in that it is possible to conceive. Five minutes walk in any direction carries one into the high woods, and the society of the beasts of the forest ; and the spectacle of their instincts, and habits, would far exceed in interest what can be found in the settlement. Hunting would be the *dernier ressort* ; and all here are well skilled in wood craft.

We returned through the woods, yet neither way did we see bird or beast ; and the only novelty was the *hoo ! hoo ! hoo !* of the monkeys, a sound somewhat analogous to the hootings of an owl. This was the first time I had heard it. I had been led to anticipate flocks of parrots and legions of monkeys, with wild turkeys enough to fill a caravan : so much do florid descriptions overdo the sober reality ! We got back to Bellevue by six o'clock in the evening, quite tired out.

Here it may be as well to explain the squatting system, as it prevails at Trinidad. Up to this time, not one-tenth part of Trinidad is inhabited ; therefore, the Government has been but too willing to wink at people squatting on the crown-lands, merely to get

a semblance of population, who have an interest in the soil. Lately, however, an ordinance has been issued for all squatters to come forward, and petition for grants of their lands, subject to competition at a small upset price. From the ignorance, stupidity, or cunning of the negro squatters, this was only very partially responded to. Lord Harris most humanely extended the date, but, as it seems, to very little effect. Government, therefore, leniently decreed, that on the squatters getting their lots surveyed, at their own expense, a free grant should be made to all who had been eight years in possession, with a very broad latitude as to exactness in dates; and to make these surveys, my lively friend Devenish was invited by their respective populations to Orapouche and Siparia. In all dealings with the blacks, it is necessary to have the money in hand before you begin to do anything for them. Such shifts, such evasions, such tricks were resorted to, in order to avoid parting with their dollars! Mr. Devenish, if left to himself, was far too tender-hearted not to be cheated out of half his dues; so he deputed Jose to receive the money, as he, being a Spaniard, was absolutely invulnerable. No lies could move him, no sighs could seduce him to abate one
‘ stiver; and this is the only proper way to deal with the negroes, so thoroughly unprincipled and ungrateful are the whole race. The mulattoes, however, are decidedly worse.

I determined to visit Orapouche, celebrated for its lagoon, an immense swamp, many miles in extent,

and abounding with waterfowl. We made an arrangement to go by land to a certain point, where, at three o'clock, a boat was to take us up, and carry us into the lagoon.

I set off with Devenish and Jose, and at two P.M. entered the woods, where our guide soon got bewildered, and after squeezing past pit-mucks, breaking through withes, and sinking into mud for an hour and a half, we got to the muddy margin of a canal, cut some years ago by a Mr. Godineau, to carry down sugar from his estate. In scrambling through all sorts of annoyances, a characteristic trait of South American feeling was elicited. Devenish, armed with a double-barrelled gun, had, in his eagerness to commit slaughter on the game, gone out of sight, leaving me alone with the Spaniard : at the same moment two of the numerous tendrils or withes impeded my progress ; one caught me across the face, and the other effectually checked me by taking me across the breast. To sever these I drew a large spring clasp-knife, and unwittingly kept it open in my hand for a short time, in case it might be again wanted for the same purpose : then closed it, and thought no more of the matter. Not so my companion.

"What !" said he afterwards to Mr. Devenish, "did he doubt me, that no sooner were we left alone, than he drew that large knife, and kept it open in his hand ? *Yo soy un hombre onesto* (I am an honest man), and mean nobody any harm." Nor was it until assured that in England we never under such circumstances

suspected any one of evil intentions that he could be pacified. "*Me he sentido*," said he, "*un poco insultado*" (I felt somewhat insulted).

We waited for an hour and a half on the doleful banks of this dark-brown canal, looking in vain for a boat ; so, fearing to be left to struggle through these difficult woods in the dark, we set off home. Jose, though considered to be well acquainted with the woods, had considerable difficulty to find out the right trail ; so rapid is vegetation here, that to make sure, a man requires to traverse the forest at least once a fortnight. After being for some time bewildered, we got to a colony of Kroomen squatters. Here we saw a real banjo, the most primitive musical instrument that can be conceived. It was formed of a piece of hard wood, about a foot in length, and an inch and a half thick, rounded at one end. On this eighteen *strings*, made of slips of thin wood of unequal lengths, were tightly fastened, and then raised by a bridge. It was played with the thumbs, and really sounded very well, considering the material. The owner was extremely careful in tuning it, which he did very accurately. He refused to sell it, "cause him too good," and had not another. On my asking him if there were any in Africa of the same sort, the answer was, "dere too much plenty."

Soon after we left the canal, the boat, it appeared, had arrived, the boatman's "dodge" being to arrive just late enough to take us home, but too late to admit of our going on the lagoon ; and so to receive the

money without the trouble of earning it. But he only got his trouble for his reward, a proper requital for negro cunning.

The lagoon can only be entered with the flood-tide ; so we procured a boat the next morning at seven o'clock, and set off, with a double-barrelled gun, to kill the myriads of wild fowl, parrots, flamingoes, and caymen that we were to see. We proposed to eke out the provisions which we carried in the boat with magnificent oysters.

We entered the canal from the sea, the tide switching us up in grand style. The canal was very narrow, and the banks on either side were lined with mangrove-trees. Shoals of *gros yeux*, a fish about six inches in length, with enormously large eyes, darted from the banks into the stream, and would seem to bask on the mud, with their noses out of water. Indeed when they swim, three parts of the fish is seen, so high do they raise themselves above the surface. Immense gropers abound in the lower part of this canal, and an upset would be a serious matter, as the groper is more dreaded than the shark. Six feet, and two hundred pounds, are a common length and weight ; and they have been known to reach ten feet in length, and six in circumference.

From the canal, many channels lead into the great lagoon, so intricate and so overgrown by mangroves, as to be extremely difficult to penetrate. The one chosen by our boatmen was so narrow, and so beset by the roots of these bushes, interlaced with each other,

that we had to cutlass our way, and then to drag the boat through by main strength. The water had an abominably foul smell, was slimy on the surface, and had large bubbles floating on it. Fever is a common result of an expedition to this spot.

We got at last into the small lagoon, a mile or so in diameter, and filled with small islands of mangroves rooted in the water. The lagoon was so shallow that we grounded every five minutes, when out our men sprang into the water, and dragged the boat over the shoal, though not without stirring up the loathsome-smelling black mud. This portion of our voyage was extremely disagreeable; but in some parts there are from three to four fathoms water.

Somewhat disappointed at our progress, I asked of my friend :

“Where are the oysters you promised me?”

“Oh, they are under water now,” he replied; “the tide is too high.”

“Where are the myriads of wild fowl?”

“Patience, my dear fellow; it is only when the tide is out, that they come to feed.”

“Well, where are the parrots?”

“Why—hem! I don’t think it’s exactly the season, though I have seen clouds of them at certain times.”

“Well, then the flamingoes?”

“Oh! I dare say, we shall see some; we are not in the right place yet.”

We certainly were not in the right place for oysters;

of wild fowl we did see a few, or something of the sort, but at a great distance. *One* flamingo was said to have been seen by our boatmen. Parrots were absolutely invisible. We heard infant caymen, as large as lizards, pop into the water, though I could not distinguish any of them ; and one of a tolerable size was fired at and wounded, but sank. All that I can swear to is, that I certainly did hear the report of the gun.

At length we reached the great lagoon, a level space of three or four miles broad, and running up ten or fifteen miles into the interior of the island. The whole, as far as we could see, was bounded by the high woods, indicated by the occasional lofty cabbage-palms. We were in a channel of clear salt water, thirty feet wide, fringed by dwarf mangrove bushes two feet high, with patches of rushes, sedgy and other paludial vegetation.

In fact, the lagoon is an immense plain, exactly on a level with the sea, which at high water finds its way up through many inlets, and covers the surface, leaving at low water a mass of rich alluvial mud, the resort of wild fowl. It is intersected by many channels of deeper water, which may be termed its rivers. From this chaotic mixture of mud and water, spring an infinity of islands, few of which can be trodden with dry feet, although there are many tall and hoary-looking trees on them, generally so festooned with creepers, that the original character of the foliage of the tree is lost, whilst from every elbow of the

branches spring aloë-like parasites. The scene was curious enough for once ; but I cannot say that there was any particular beauty in it, the canals being extremely monotonous, whilst the low mangrove bushes prevented one seeing more over them than the tops of the trees.

We came upon three negroes with rod and line fishing. My companion landed on the mud, and popped away at some small aquatic birds, but without success, the game being *trop sauvage*. At the turn of the tide we rowed back, and came out more easily than we entered, the only sounds that broke the silence being the popping and crackling of the oysters as the tide left them dry. This was incessant—a regular oyster *conversazione*, and occasionally a bird would utter a loud “quark.” We were carried down the canal to the sea by force of the tide alone, steering with an oar, so rapid is the efflux, and we were glad enough to get home.

I discovered that the plaintive note, so characteristic of Trinidad, which had often puzzled me, proceeded from the pul-do (*poulet de l'eau*), a small water-bird that seeks out sedgy places, and cool moist spots. Its gentle, melancholy note is heard wherever the country is cleared. Another but bolder note that constantly meets the ear, is the kesk-a-dee, (*Qu'est-ce qu'il dit ?*) which question the bird pronounces very distinctly. It is said to be a large brown bird. Generally, the British are so apathetic, and so ill-informed on subjects at all out of their line of business,

that it is extremely difficult to get any information from them, "Waal, I coudna just say," being usually the burthen of Sandie's response to any inquiry.

I was present one morning when the people on an estate refused to work, so the sugar-making was obliged to stand still. Some wanted to go to their provision-grounds, others to wash clothes, and some to visit San Fernando; in fact, they made any excuse to avoid work. They refuse to sign contracts to labour for a given time, so that the poor manager has no remedy, and allows them to work off and on, just as they think fit or can be *coaxed*. What a nice state of things between employer and labourer! Each labourer on an estate has a house furnished him *gratuitously*—a great absurdity. In this he has little or no furniture, so can be idle without his expenses running on, and leave the place whenever he is inclined: whilst so supine are the magistracy, or so inclined to favour the insolent black against his white employer, that any attempt to seek a remedy through magisterial interference is merely time thrown away. Throughout the colony, the only object of the government officers seems to be, to receive their salaries, and kept as quiet, and interfere as little as they can, thus tacitly encouraging the negroes in their most vexatious proceedings. With one or two bright exceptions, the community is the most corrupt, venal, and unprincipled I ever could have conceived possible to exist.

I talked to the overseer, and *at* the people, right before them all, and made a great flourish "that Go-

vernment would see that they were utterly unfit for freedom, and it would probably end by their being made slaves again," &c. I also declared that if I were owner, I would immediately have them all well flogged; and the effect of this lecture was, that in three minutes all who were present were at work.

I visited the Abbé K——, the parish priest of Orapouche, who, from the peculiar discipline of the Church of Rome, might be supposed to have a clearer insight into the character of the population than a Protestant clergyman. The Abbé described his flock as the most atrocious vagabonds he had ever encountered. "They have," said he, "every vice under heaven, but I have never yet been able to discover in them one single virtue to counterbalance the evil. Out of my large flock, I have but five women, and three old men, pious, humble Christians. The mulattoes are, if possible, more vicious than the negroes." "But they confess?" said I. "Never," was the answer, "except on their death-beds, when the terrors of death overwhelm their guilty souls. Then the confession is poured out to God, rather than to me. On any great festival, they flock to church just to see the show, which, however, they treat with the greatest indifference." There is a Protestant church at Orapouche, to which the minister comes every three Sundays of each month; but the living is literally a sinecure.

The cabbage of the gru-gru palm is held to be superior to that of the real *Euterpe edulis*, and Mr. S—— was so obliging as to have a large one cut down

for us. When down, it is a most disagreeable tree to approach, as even its branches, to say nothing of the trunk, are stuck over with dangerous spines, and every part swarms with myriads of large red ants, which sting most furiously. Devenish cut down, *per suo proprio mano*, a juvenile gru-gru, the oddest tree that I ever saw. It seems to be a congeries of spines, inside as well as out, the centre being hollow. From the inside of the cylinder I extracted tough, light-coloured spines, three inches and a half in length. I was somewhat disappointed in the cabbage, as part of it was simply boiled, and part made into a salad, with bad oil and no vinegar; whereas the orthodox thing is to make a stew of it. This was my last incident in the country, and next day I returned to Port of Spain.

We heard at Orapouche an incredible story about mosquito worms having been found in the skins of people; *i.e.*, that a certain species of mosquito could deposit a larva that would produce a worm several inches long—in fact, a hundred times as large as its depositor. This, on the face of it, seemed to be so absurd, that I set it down as a hoax; but I was referred to *any* medical man in Port of Spain to confirm the truth of the assertion. First I questioned my old friend, Mr. W——, on the subject, when, to my astonishment, he at once confirmed the fact, adding, that “one had been taken out of his own leg, and that he had seen several taken out of dogs. This mosquito,” he said, “was only to be found in certain localities.” I afterwards questioned Dr. Anderson on the subject,

and he assured me that in the course of his practice he had several times been called on to extract them from various parts of the bodies of negroes, principally women. The part selected by the insect was usually the *mammæ*, or pectoral muscles. Sometimes the sides were chosen, but generally the softer parts of the body, "I have extracted them," said he, "four inches long, and as large as one's thumb. If left to themselves, they cause great inflammation, and generate a most impracticable sore; but I do not believe that the parent insect, whatever it may be, *is* a mosquito, though the progeny is commonly known amongst us as the mosquito worm. In a town practice like mine, of many years' standing, I have never known more than perhaps a dozen cases, though country practitioners may have had more numerous opportunities than myself; of the fact, however, there is *no* doubt. There is also the guinea worm, often five inches in length, which, if not attended to promptly, produces a distressing ulcer, that in this climate takes a long time to cure."

Whilst on the subject of worms, I must not overlook the gru-gru worm, a grub, the larva of some insect deposited in this curious tree. It is an inch long, of a white colour, with a black head, and is considered by the French here, and by some of the English, as an exquisite *bonne bouché*. Indeed, it is often brought as such to the market of Port of Spain, where it is eagerly purchased. *Chacun à son goût*.

Towards the end of March I went to the Palmiste

estate, in the district of South Naponima. There, as elsewhere, I was astonished at the insolence and laziness of the negroes. The tasks they had were very light, yet they were incessantly grumbling, and that in no low tone. The few coolies labouring here were very orderly, doing the light work, for which they are alone fit, herding mules, carrying mogass, or cane-trash, driving carts, &c., very steadily. Coolies and negroes never associate, as they mutually despise each other. Under all circumstances, the higher intellect of the Asiatic is very evident. Coolies have none of the insolence of the negro, but, on the contrary, are extremely polite, and teach their children also to *salaam*.

I went down in a boat to Carenage Bay, and thence through the Valley of Quesa to the Prospect estate, a large property belonging to S. C——, Esq., of Bristol, for whom I made some sketches of the scenery.

Here the negro labourers were still more insolent and insubordinate, treating their employers as the party favoured by their labours. Never before did I so wish for whip and brand, to punish these wretches. British legislation for the colonies has indeed brought about these dire results.

I found that some of the insubordination arose from the doubts of the negroes as to whether they should ultimately get paid. It is nominally the practice to pay them every six weeks, a period which is often allowed to run on to within a day or two of three months ; and as, *ad interim*, they have been compelled,

from want of cash, to buy all their necessities at a very high price, at the shop belonging to the estate the balance that they have to receive is often a very small one. The truth is, that in Trinidad, the pay of the negro labourer is far too high, more than the sugar-planter can pay, being four bits, or one shilling and eightpence per diem, a house rent free, and nothing in the shape of taxes. Efforts are being made to reduce the price of labour, but it is stoutly resisted. Hence the necessity of paying at long periods, and bagging as much as possible through the high profits of the shop. A field negro seldom works more than five hours a day. In the boiling-house, during the crop-season, it is different, as sugar-boiling is often not over until ten o'clock at night. Sometimes, indeed, they work as late as eleven; but then those so employed get more pay. Judging from the insolent demeanour and scowling brows of the negroes, I should scarcely be astonished if, when the estates are abandoned, and these labourers are left quite to their own resources, they should rise and oust the whites altogether.

The second night of my sojourn at Prospect, seventeen eggs were stolen from under a duck belonging to the manager, as well as a new Marseilles quilt, used by me partly as a cover to a little hut erected as a shelter from the sun. The negro sent for it proclaimed it missing; and the manager publicly announced, that until it was forthcoming, the *grog and pay* of the whole gang (one hundred and fifty) should

be stopped. This wholesale threat had the desired effect, and at night it was found by the negro first ent for it, hidden under a stone. This sort of thing goes on the year round.

"Have you no trustworthy men amongst your labourers?" I inquired.

"Yes," was the answer, "there are, perhaps, half-a-dozen; but the majority are villains, who, so far from checking, would encourage and participate in any act of robbery." Such is the negro character.

In the houses of many of the managers of estates, matters are worse. As a general rule, if a manager marry, he is dismissed by his employer, and is ineligible to obtain any other situation; therefore, he does not marry; and, as a consequence, negro female servants laugh and dawdle about all day, being, as might be expected, beyond control. One morning his breakfast may be ready at half-past nine; the next day it can scarcely be had at eleven o'clock, and so throughout the whole *ménage*.

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BOOK DUE

CANCELLED

DEC 8 2003

BOOK DUE

